
T H E
ABBEY OF ST. ASAPH.





ABBHEY of S^T. ASAPH.

FRONTISPIECE



ELINOR and JENNET.

T H E
A B B E Y
O F
S A I N T A S A P H .

A N O V E L .

I N T H R E E V O L U M E S .

BY THE AUTHOR OF
MADLINE, OF THE CASTLE OF MONTGOMERY.

VOL. I.

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THE
A B B E Y
OF
S T. A S A P H.

CHAP. I.

SIR Malcolm Douglas was descended from a race of heroes, rendered more illustrious by their many virtues and bravery, than the high honors and dignities with which the munificence of successive monarchs had distinguished them.—Yet such were the ravages time, old-fashioned hospitality, and ruthless

VOL. I.

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war

war had made in his house and fortune, that at the age of twenty he found himself destitute of every support, save the honor of his ancestors, an elegant figure, and an unspotted sword. At a very early period he lost his parents, when an uncle of his mother, an old rich citizen, compassionating his helpless condition, received him from the arms of his nurse, gave him a very liberal education; and had he not acted contrary to his wishes and expectations, would have been his undoubted heir.—But the blood of Douglas ill brooking the necessary attendance in a counting-house, in a respectful manner he declined Mr. Richley's offer, and chose the profession of his forefathers—Arms.

His uncle enraged at such determined opposition, commanded him from his presence, vowing at the same time, that he cast him off for ever. The tears of honest pride and sensibility fell from the eyes of Sir Malcolm as he grasped his father's sword, exclaiming, "Sacred inheritance! bright my fire preserved



served thee, and never shall his son disgrace thee with a stain—never shall the son of Douglas sleep in peace while the enemies of Britain triumph. Deign then, illustrious shades of my brave ancestors, to guide a poor descendant in your *glorious* path !”

During the late war in America, he served as volunteer, when, for his gallant behaviour, he was appointed an ensign. General Spencer, his commanding officer, treated him with every mark of distinguished favor—and on their return to the garrison in Quebec, introduced him to his lady and daughter. Elinor Spencer had just entered her seventeenth year—graceful and delicate in her form, with all the mild virtues beaming in her eyes, while sense and sensibility animated her charming features. The heart of Douglas was attuned to love, and he could not behold such an assemblage of worth and loveliness without being captivated. How painful was the struggle between affection and honor in his breast ! for he considered his humble and dependent

condition by no means entitled him to address Miss Spencer—and having less vanity than any human being with equal pretensions, firmly contradicted the assertions of those who assured him she felt a mutual attachment,—yet so it proved: the gentle Elinor honored him with distinguished preference, and with delicate frankness confessed her predilection to her mother, who immediately communicating the circumstance to the General, with a generosity almost unequalled, he sanctioned their attachment; and before the commencement of the ensuing campaign the fair Elinor became the happy wife of Sir Malcolm Douglas, who, promoted to a lieutenancy, in a few weeks after his marriage attended his brave father-in-law to the field—fatal expedition! In rallying a few dispirited troops, who, horror-struck with the carnage of the day, were retreating in confusion, a musket ball deprived him of his existence, and his gallant son-in-law of the most valuable—indeed his only friend under heaven. Before his duty permitted him to fly to the support of his
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adored Elinor, and her excellent widowed parent, the melancholy news had reached them, and on his arrival he beheld Lady Douglas weeping over the cold remains of her fainted mother.

General Spencer had been a foldier of fortune, and too liberal—too kind a friend to the unhappy to be rich; so that when Sir Malcolm Douglas arrived in England, he found one thousand pounds was all he had to claim in right of Elinor Spencer. Upon inquiry, he heard that Mr. Richley had married a young woman, by whom he had a daughter. Sir Malcolm addressed him in terms of duty, gratitude, and respect; but all his repeated letters, and attendance at his house, being treated with silent contempt and denial, together with the reduction of his regiment, he resolved on retirement, with his beloved wife; and quitting the metropolis, rented a romantic little cottage, on the fertile and delightful borders of Somersetshire.

Here the Baronet was obliged to forget the ancient affluence and grandeur of his house ;—here his charming, all-complying Elinor was obliged to forget the elegance of her former condition, and those brilliant expectations to which she had been bred. It was now that the amiable pair experienced the advantages resulting from a liberal and refined education ; they were a constant source of happiness, instruction, and entertainment to each other ; while books, music, and the pencil amply engaged those hours which were not employed by the Baronet in his garden, and her ladyship in the little household. They neither envied nor visited their opulent neighbours ; but the poor, the humble, and unfortunate were sure to find that compassion and relief which the inhabitants of Bloomfield could afford.

Thus happy in themselves, their cottage was a scene of the purest domestic bliss ; and far remote from the scorning pity of a proud unthinking world, little regretted those vain pleasures

pleasure which pall upon possession ; nor the absence of that wealth which might have brought a thousand wishes not to be attained, with a thousand errors ever to be repented.— Gallant Douglas ! gentle Elinor ! these were your fereñest days. Commissioned angels, bent on deeds of mercy, might have postponed their gracious errand, and gazed delighted on this little mansion of content.

It was not until the sixth year of their retirement, that Lady Douglas gave being to a charming boy, whom, in reverence to the memory of Sir Malcolm's father, they named Lionel. In eighteen months after their family was increased by the birth of a lovely girl. These little blessings, intended by indulgent heaven to heighten conjugal endearment, and cheer the marriage state, proved to their amiable parents the innocent authors of infelicity. The Baronet, long happy in the tenderness and contentment of his beloved Elinor, had forgot, or disregarded the obscurity of his condition, when the harmless

prattle of his boy, and the soft smile of his infant girl, roused his sleeping reflections, and in bitterness of heart he deplored, deprecated his inglorious, inactive life—a life he deemed disgraceful to his ancestry, unjust to his wife, and unuseful to his children. Lady Douglas, with agony inexpressible, beheld his inward distress, would often kiss the tear of anguish from his manly cheek, and, by her enchanting sweetness, sooth him to momentary peace and composure; but the effort to render them lasting was vain; the more her amiable zeal was exerted, the more he considered it his duty to rescue her and her precious little ones from threatened poverty and reproach.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

A FRIEND INTRODUCED.

LADY Douglas was advancing in her third pregnancy, when one tempestuous night she was alarmed by a loud knocking at the outward gate of their cottage; on the door being opened by Sir Malcolm, a stranger of majestic figure entreated shelter from the storm, and if it could be made convenient, obtain a messenger to carry a letter to Bath. He was welcomed with the smile of hospitality, and a neighbouring peasant dispatched with his commands. He then informed them, that returning from a nobleman's seat,

a few miles distant, he recollected having left a packet of consequence, and sent his servant for it; that as he rode slowly on, two footpads attacked him, dragged him from his horse, and pillaged his pockets. Being unarmed, he was obliged to submit, when they mounted his courser, and was out of sight in a moment. "After wandering in the dark," continued the stranger, "for a considerable time, unknowing whither I went, at length I discovered light in your windows, and conceive myself truly fortunate in being sheltered and assisted in your friendly little mansion." While he was speaking, Sir Malcolm gazed earnestly in his face; and, without having listened with much attention, when he ceased, requested to know whether he had ever been in America, as he slightly knew a gallant officer there to whom he bore great resemblance."

"If that officer," replied the stranger, "was Sir Eldred Trevallion, you behold him in me—and, if my senses do not much delude

delude me, I have the honor—I must call it happiness, to be indebted to the hospitable kindness of Sir Malcolm Douglas and his charming Elinor, the daughter of my ill-fated, regretted friend, General Spencer.”

Sir Malcolm arose, and pressing his hand with respectful cordiality, replied, “Perhaps, Sir Eldred, I ought not to confess the confusion I feel at your beholding me sunk in this dishonorable obscurity, since it has enabled me to render you a little service, and afforded me an opportunity to reverence your condescension in acknowledging a remembrance of a man so fallen from what he once was.”

Mutual compliments having passed between Lady Douglas and Sir Eldred, the two Baronets conversed with agreeable freedom, till the only attendant Bloomfield cottage could boast, served up the evening repast with decent neatness. Sir Eldred was highly gratified in the simplicity around him, enjoyed his fare, and appeared delighted with his

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friends ; while Lady Douglas, seeing her husband resume his former happy vivacity, wore those enchanting smiles which render the female countenance irresistible. During the evening Sir Malcolm was so pleased with the candour and generosity which his new friend discovered in every sentiment, that with little hesitation he disclosed his condition, expressing deep regret that he past the summer of his life in torpitude, in a manner equally dishonorable and injurious to his family. A smile of innate benignity was diffused over the face of Sir Eldred as he replied, " My dear Sir Malcolm, I command on an important expedition to the West-Indies, I can lead you to fame, and mend your fortune—but"—he stopt—his expressive eye conveyed the rest. The heart of Douglas beat high with expectation, hope, and pleasure ; the spirits of Elinor sunk within her, while in tremulous accents she thanked Sir Eldred for his undeserved favor and friendship. " Proceed, generous Sir," continued she ; " hesitate not in declaring your future intentions ; my soul, fearless

fearless of danger, save for my Malcolm's dearer life, can sustain fatigue, want, pain, even death itself, without a murmur, spare me, spare me but the pang of separation—Go, my Douglas, attend the wishes of this noble friend; I would resign existence rather than your honor should be tarnished, or your courage suspected. All I pray is leave to follow you, to watch your anguished hours, perhaps, alas! to aid your parting moments, and share your early honored grave.” Sir Eldred, affected even to tears, soothed her with the kindest assurances of every indulgence to her wishes, when her situation would admit of the voyage, adding, “I also leave a young beloved partner, whose boundless affection would share the hardships of a soldier's life, but an anxious family absolutely prohibits it.

Matters were soon and easily adjusted between Sir Malcolm and his patron: he was promoted to a company, and appointed aid-du-camp. During the time Sir Eldred was
arranging

arranging private concerns at the Abbey of St. Asaph, his paternal inheritance in Wales, Sir Malcolm employed himself in attempting to sooth the distressed Elinor, who, as the hour of departure drew near, forgot the heroine in the feelings of the woman and the fears of the wife. "It is for thee, my angelic Elinor," her husband would tenderly say, "it is for thee, and thy loved innocents, I go, to become more worthy thy attachment, to give thee merited affluence and comfort, and them those distinctions and advantages to which the race of Douglas and your father are entitled. Smile then, my love! depress not thy Malcolm's spirit, which, though it scorns the thought of danger for itself, trembles for Elinor and her dear peace. Secure in conscious rectitude, that Being we have ever served, who hath ever blessed our guiltless passion, will shield me from mischance, comfort thy lonely hours, and safe restore me to thy faithful arms. Soon as our other infant sees the light, we shall be re-united, and smile at past distress." "Yes," replied the fair,

fair mourner, the tears of anguish streaming down her cheeks, and desponding sighs bursting from her predictive bosom, "yes, I will follow—be re-united, though in death. Be-think thee, Douglas, ere we part, that I have none on earth but thee—father, brothers, friends—the sword hath taken all; and now—oh 'tis the bitterness of death! I must resign my sole remaining treasure to its mercy. Savage sword! remorseless honor! canst thou dry the widow's anguished tears, repress the groans from her distracted heart, redress the orphan's wrongs, or save them from the scorn attending penury and want? Ah, no! then Douglas why dost thou forsake me!"—"Dearest Elinor, repress this fond emotion," interrupted her husband in agony; "why such gloomy images; why unman thy Malcolm's spirit; increase the pangs which rend his nature in leaving thee and thine, though for the future happiness of all? But say—shall I reject the generous offers of Sir Eldred? for you can shake each purpose of my soul—shall I then poorly shrink from duty—live in
shameful

shameful safety, and give your children cause to execrate the ashes of their father? Yes, Elinor, *right* to execrate that love you bore him for having made them to endure a life of wretchedness." "Be merciful," said Lady Douglas, resuming a composed dignity, "be merciful—the wife and daughter of a soldier can feel the claims upon a soldier's duty.—Go—prosper. Never shall a child accuse me of its fate.—No—mine will early learn to pity—but shall never blame me."

When the hour of separation arrived, Lady Douglas, pale, silent, and trembling, sunk in her husband's arms. Sir Eldred, to give her thoughts a happier turn, assuming an air of gaiety, declared he should be back in time to stand god-father. A faint smile appeared on her face for a moment; she perceived the kindly intent, and wished not to disappoint it. She had promised to spend some time with Lady Trevallion previous to her departure; and it was agreed that the children should be left under her care till the parents' return.

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These preliminaries being settled, and every possible comfort secured that the condition of Lady Douglas required, Sir Malcolm quitted the cottage of Bloomfield, and attended his worthy patron to the seat of war.

A desponding gloom still depressed the anxious bosom of her ladyship—the cottage was no longer the abode of content; peace fled with Douglas, and all appeared desolate around; sleep deserted her pillow, or when sunk in any momentary slumber, her fancy became more perturbed than even her waking thoughts. Sometimes she beheld her husband driven by the whirling tempest through the boundless ocean; then shipwrecked, on some barren rock expiring. Swift imagination would bear her to the field of battle; there she would view him pale, wounded, and bleeding—he would feebly press her hand, sigh out “Poor Elinor!” and in her arms yield up his breath. It was from one of these agonized slumbers that she awoke in violent pain, and after suffering severely

verely for some days, gave being to a boy who resigned its innocent soul a few hours after his birth. Slow and doubtful was the recovery of the mother, who, while yet feeble, bade adieu to her long-loved cottage, and, with Lionel and Elinor, arrived at the winter residence of Sir Eldred Trevallion, in Grosvenor-Square. His charming Lady received and welcomed her with the most amiable freedom, offered every proof of delicate friendship, shared her melancholy, and in the most affectionate terms promised to be a mother to the infants during her absence. "Doubt not, dearest Madam," said her ladyship in the most prepossessing voice, "that my ardent prayers and wishes are for the safety and success of your Douglas; he shares the fate—is interested in the fortunes of my Eldred, and is beloved by him; all which give him large claims on my regard.—" "Wou'd!" she continued, "that my precious little burden saw the light, and it would require some power superior to humanity to detain me from him. Do you
then,

then, my friend, happier far than I, bear him all my love, my wishes, fears and fond anxieties, while your smiling tenderness, your soothing cares of Douglas teach him what Rodolpha would have done."

After taking a weeping leave of her darlings, and fondly embracing Lady Trevallion, with assurances of lasting regard and gratitude, the wife of Douglas embarked on board the packet for the Island of St. Kitts, where Sir Eldred commanded.

CHAP. III.

THE FATE OF WAR.

AFTER a stormy passage of six weeks, with a weakened frame, and a heart sinking beneath the pressure of trembling anxiety and predictive horrors, Lady Douglas arrived at St. Kitts the evening of the day on which Sir Eldred and his conquering army had gained a signal victory over the enemies of Britain. Her ladyship and maid were respectfully attended to head quarters, to wait the arrival of Sir Eldred. The shouts of victory were resounding through the air, seeming to rend the vast concave of heaven,

heaven, yet her poor breast was cold, desolate, and cheerless. The fate of officers and men was still unknown ; and all were waiting in anxious, dreadful expectation, to learn the destiny of those they loved. The day had been glorious—the evening was triumphant, yet still each interested bosom trembled ; still the rose forsook the cheek of Lady Douglas, and the blood receded to her heart. At length the warlike din of drums, trumpets, triumphant shouts, and, fancy might have added, groans assailed her ear. It drew nearer, while her heart beat as if it would have burst her icy bosom. In a few minutes an officer entered Sir Eldred's tent—she advanced to meet him ; her hands were clasped, her eyes raised, and she feebly asked, “ Does he live ?—Oh ! lives my husband ? ” “ His name, madam ? ” demanded he, respectfully supporting her. “ Douglas ! ” The youth started, turned pale, and while the drums and trumpets struck up the march of victory, replied, “ Madam, the General is entering.” Sir Eldred appeared, followed by soldiers bearing

bearing the bleeding body of the gallant Douglas. "Elinor here!" exclaimed the General, retreating quick. "Righteous God! my soul is unprepared for this. Oh, Douglas, my preserver! would I had died—would thou hadst never saved me—never—never known me! Sweet mourner!" added he, pressing the passive hand of the cold silent Elinor; "sweet mourner, I—"—Nature could no more. The undaunted warrior, who but a few short hours before, fearless looked death and danger in the face, and dealt destruction to the foes of Britain, now vanquished by his strong emotions, burst into tears. The expiring Douglas was gently supported; every aid was vain, the blood ceased to flow from the gaping wound in his breast, the shades of death were gathering fast around him, and the parting sigh of mortality lingered on his pallid lip. Once he opened his dying eyes, fixed them with faint expression on his friend, and sighing "Elinor, my wife!" expired. Sir Eldred, almost insensible what he did, continued to hold the lifeless hand of Douglas,

Douglas, while the bereft widow alarmingly calm approached, and kneeling by the sacred remains, hung in speechless agony over the pale yet still adored countenance. Sir Eldred, a little recovered, commanded the attendants to gently remove her: unresisting she yielded compliance; and without uttering a word, or even breathing a sigh, was supported to bed. Necessary orders being given respecting the funeral of Douglas, Sir Eldred, in the height of victory, retired in sorrow and disconsolation, while with the evening gun closed the varied tumults of the day.

Early next morning, languid and unrefreshed, Lady Douglas arose from her bed to seek the presence of Sir Eldred. A fever was gaining fast on her tortured spirits, yet she appeared composed and perfectly sensible. Being informed Sir Eldred was deeply engaged in military arrangements, and could not attend her for some hours, patient and resigned she meekly seated herself to await his leisure. The sun was shining cheerly and
bright,

bright, every countenance in her eye wore the smile of exultation; and casting a look of anguish on those passing the pavilion, she faintly exclaimed, "Yes, smile—for ye are happy—ye have lost no Douglas. Ah me, how proud was I of him and of his courage—how rich in his dear love and wondrous worth! but he hath left me—left me in a world to weep unpitied, and alone. Oh! dearly purchased honor!—false delusive shade! canst thou now, in this drear hour, with all thy glittering boasts, restore a father to my infants—canst thou sustain this fainting heart—this sinking frame? Ah, no!—he bled—he fell in thy destroying arms—and now, forgetful of poor Elinor and children, lies cold and silent on thy ruthless bed; one bleeding trophy more to swell thy savage triumph." She was interrupted in her sad apostrophe by the Dead March founding with slow and grand solemnity. Starting from her knees, she shrieked "It is—oh God! it is the obsequies of Douglas!" and swift as lightning joined the mournful procession. Her conjecture

conjecture was right—they were conducting his remains with martial honors to the grave. To spare her widowed heart unnecessary pangs, Sir Eldred intended to consign his ill-fated friend to dust without her knowledge; and little supposing she would suspect his funeral so soon, commanded his attendants to say that military business engaged him a few hours. The event proved his kind precaution vain. Deeply immersed in his own melancholy reflections, with his heavy eyes fixed on earth, a sudden halt of the whole procession roused his attention, and ere he had time to inquire the cause, to his petrified sight, pale, trembling, and kneeling at his feet, appeared the widow of Douglas. He attempted to raise her. “No,” she cried with frantic wildness; “No—never—never, till to these longing eyes is given once more my husband.” “Forbear! oh forbear,” said Sir Eldred; “in mercy to the orphans of Douglas have pity on yourself.” Entreaty proved ineffectual; every look and gesture were alarming and resolved—so that on a

signal from Sir Eldred, the coffin was unclosed at her foot, and discovered the body of Douglas decently shrouded in his shawl.—His countenance, noble even in death, had acquired an affecting serenity, which spoke the conscious spirit in the realms of bliss. • The brave companions of his dangers proved on this occasion that sensibility and bravery are not incompatible ; the sigh of commiseration burst responsive from every bosom, while Lady Douglas, meekly kneeling, kissed the cold face of the deceased, exclaiming, “ Yes it is my husband ! the father of my angels, the man so cherished in my heart—the man I followed, the man I found—alas ! how found ?—Yet, oh my tortured soul, be calm, be firm, and execute thy purpose.” Those near involuntarily started, while Sir Eldred grasped her arm. “ Fear not,” resumed she with dignity, “ nor shrink from hearing Elinor’s resolve. And hover thou blessed spirit of my Douglas, and in thy heaven record thy widow’s vow—now lost to every joy, bereft of every comfort, and left to struggle

with a cruel world, without the cheering voice, the kind support of thee, so long my guide, my love, my husband. *I yet will live*—live in remembrance of thy matchless worth, to teach thy children what their father was—teach them to venerate his very name, and imitate his bright example: for their dear sakes, unheedful of a scorning world, thy wretched widow will endure her bitter fate, trusting, when life's bleak storm is over, in happier realms, where wars cannot divide us, to share with thee a bright eternity—a never ending day—till then farewell! beloved relics, yet one more—one parting kiss. Now I feel more serene,” added she, rising. “Dear Sir Eldred I retire to wait your leisure.”

Her steps were failing—but supported by an officer and her maid, she reached the pavilion, where she continued meekly composed, and even listened to the particulars of Sir Malcolm's fatal wounds. He fell in defence of his patron: a savage chief, with heart black and malign as his sable hue, towards

the close of the battle, in fell revenge for fellow rebels slain, aimed at Sir Eldred's heart a deadly blow; quick as lightning Douglas interposed, and cleft the villain down—but fatal conquest! received from another the contents of a carbine full in his generous breast. Sir Eldred felt more than the stroke of death had given his brave deliverer; his arms supported him while surgeons examined and pronounced his wounds mortal. The surviving enemy were flying, victory was sounding, but the spirit of the conqueror felt not exultation—his friend, his preserver hastened to dissolution; his gallant soul was on its flight, while all the triumphs of Sir Eldred were forgotten in his bleeding wounds. Sir Malcolm soon lost the power of speech.—“I die resigned, dear Sir Eldred!” said he feebly; “happy in having saved you; Britain will protect the son of Douglas—Oh be it your's to sooth my widowed Elinor.” Here his voice seemed to fail—and whether his fading eyes had caught a glimpse of her beloved form on entering the tent, or that
his

his parting sigh breathed her name as the dearest object of his soul, cannot be determined.

Lady Douglas listened to the above relation with surprising composure, and on the appearance of Sir Eldred even assumed a degree of ease. Sensible his every action had sprung from motives of benevolence, and that he intended the happiness of her family, she repressed her feelings in his presence, fearing he should conceive complaining sorrow conveyed oblique reproach for the innocent part he had in the fate of Douglas, and heighten that anguish which appeared so visible in his open countenance. She therefore only spoke of her children and returning to England.

“Dearest madam,” said the generous Baronet, kindly taking her hand, “you can never know the pleasure I feel at beholding even this, your assumed serenity, which, while it evinces the benignity of your nature, gives

balm to my tortured heart—a heart bleeding for the loss of Douglas—a heart that will cherish the remembrance of his virtues, and by offices of friendship to his family, evince my veneration. Methinks, I still behold the dauntless hero rushing in the very throat of death to save his friend.—Gallant spirit! what tribute can I offer to thy memory?" Tears fell from the eyes of Lady Douglas, and happily relieved the swelling tide of sorrow. "I was surely less than human," continued he, wiping them away, "to add a poignancy to your affliction. Oh let me stop this flowing tide of anguish, and deign to believe my fervid assurance, that I will be a father, a tender careful father to your children—I will ever be the soother, and the sharer of your griefs—affluence shall be the inmate of your dwelling, and large shall be your means to gratify each generous inclination—my unceasing solicitude shall watch your wishes, while my Rodolpha will beguile you of your cares, and be unto you a sister."

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With weeping gratitude she thanked him for his generous kindness and intended favor to her orphans; and, when he retired, prostrate on the earth acknowledged the mercy of heaven in giving to the offspring of Douglas such a noble friend.

CHAP. IV.

UNHAPPY TIDINGS.

AFTER a very quick and prosperous voyage, Sir Eldred Trevallion and his widowed charge arrived safely in England. On repairing to Grosvenor-Square, they were

much disappointed at finding Lady Trevalion and family were at the Abbey of St. Asaph. The house-keeper also acquainted him with the birth of a daughter; and on his inquiring for the children of Lady Douglas, was told they were perfectly well, and adored by all around them.

After allowing Lady Douglas as many hours rest as impatience to embrace her little ones would permit her to take, Sir Eldred set out for Wales; but all his entreaties could not prevail on her ladyship to pass her humble cottage, the dear retirement of Bloomfield. "No!" said she; "here will I serve my God—cherish the orphans of my love, meditate on Douglas, and teach his children how to imitate his goodness." The cottage was in the same condition she had left it: her old domestic welcomed her with gladness, while the sable robe forbade inquiry for her master. Sir Eldred was extremely hurt at his friend's perseverance; but contenting himself with the hope of his
lady

lady being able to shake her resolution, after entreating her acceptance of a pocket-book for present expences, and promising an immediate return with the children, on the wings of impatience, he set out for his paternal seat.

Many days of painful anxiety elapsed, and still Lady Douglas heard no tidings from Sir Eldred. Her mind, though naturally cheerful, since her husband's death had acquired a desponding gloom; and unconscious why, now feared some fatal accident to her darlings—All the mother trembled within her; and she had determined on a journey to St. Asaph, when a mourning chariot stopt at the cottage gate, and in a moment she folded the blooming little blessings to her throbbing heart. "Image of my fainted Douglas!" cried she, gazing on the boy, "resemble but thy father in thy mind and virtues, as in feature, and thou wilt bless some happy bosom with his kindred worth. And thee, my smiling Elinor, oh may his noble nature
C 5 shine

shine in thee—his gentle manners be thy winning charm, and then indeed my children will adorn humanity. Grant, Eternal Providence, the supplicated blessings of a widowed mother, who will endure thy dispensations with a humble spirit.”

She then released them from her arms ; and Lionel leading his sister to the cottage garden, their mother unclosed her packet, the address of which she was surprised to observe neither in the hand of Sir Eldred nor Lady Trevallion ; but how severe a shock to her gentle nature and feelings was the following intelligence from the house keeper of St. Asaph :

“MADAM,

“In obedience to Sir Hugh Trevallion, my present master, with deep concern I beg leave to inform your ladyship that the worthy Sir Eldred and his lady are no more. A few weeks after the birth of a daughter, a premature account from the West-Indies announced

nounced Sir Eldred being mortally wounded; unhappily it met his lady's hand, who on reading it fell into strong convulsions; a fatal fever ensued, and the dear lady only lived two days after his arrival, when she expired in his arms. He was immediately seized with a melancholy which has produced the most heart-rending consequences—consequences ever to be deplored while his unequalled worth and goodness can be remembered. He was constantly attended by two domestics, and Doctor Martin seldom left him. One evening, overcome with watching and fatigue, the attendants dropt into a heavy sleep, during which the poor patient was seized with wild delirium, and before the Doctor could summon any assistance, unable himself to combat with his more than natural strength, he started from bed, and dashed himself with fury from the chamber window into a rapid river, which washes the rock this ancient pile is founded on. The night being dark and stormy, every attempt to save him would have been unavailing; and

the body, after the most diligent search, not being found, it is supposed that (as the river empties into the sea) it has been carried down with the current and buried in the deep.

“ Sir Eldred’s mother lies dangerously ill, and my master appears inconsolable—he succeeds to his brother’s title, but the infant Rodolpha is heiress to the immense revenue of St. Asaph. Sir Eldred’s will, madam, bequeaths your late husband five hundred a year—in failure of him to your ladyship, during life. Sir Hugh commands me to say, in order to spare you future trouble, as he is left guardian to Miss Trevallion, that Mr. Powel, his solicitor, has directions to pay your ladyship’s annuity quarterly on demand.

“ I have the honor to assure you, madam, that we all reluctantly restore your engaging children; and but that so many sad circumstances afflict us, we should feel their absence

fence

fence severely. I entreat, madam, that your ladyship will honor my most respectful wishes with acceptance, and condescend to believe I am your ladyship's most

"Obedient and devoted

"Humble Servant,

"ANNE WILLIAMS."

"Oh tremendous God!" exclaimed Lady Douglas, throwing down the letter, while tears of bitter regret rushed down her faded cheeks. "Oh God! unsearchable in all thy ways, who dares arraign thy wondrous plan—thy chain of causes, or seemingly severe effects—Yet might thy feeble creature once presume—to what can tend these late decrees—how—where display thy wisdom, or how promote thy glory? Ah me! weak wretched reasoner—how dark my finite understanding! Let me look round on vast creation—contemplate far distant unknown worlds—and wonder at the miracles, behold the perfect order—how well apportioned to
their

their several parts—Sure then the mighty Power which formed them all so beautiful, so passing excellent, can guide the creatures of his hand, his highest favorite work, and turn apparent evil to exceeding good—How great—how wondrous all transcending thought!—yet less than nothing when compared with the grand source of all, a self-existent God!”

Here ceased the widow of Douglas, who, lost in the depth of pious meditation, forgot that the servants of Sir Hugh Trevallion awaited her commands, until her Lionel entered, saying, “Dear mamma, pray send away that black carriage; I cannot bear the ugly colour since they covered Lady Trevallion with it, and hid her in St. Asaph dungeon.” “Alas, my boy!” said she, “it is the colour of thy mother’s fate; but may it ever keep remote from thee, and mayst thou ne’er have cause to hate it more until—” She ceased—while her plaintive voice and manner affected the amiable child, who sup-
posing

posing her offended, promised, with sweet simplicity, to try and love it, if she would not look so sad. His harmless tongue recalled the voice of Douglas to remembrance—long lost pleasures were obtruding on her pensive mind, when, to repress the rising emotion, she dismissed her son with a kiss; and in the best manner her agitation would permit, wrote letters of proper acknowledgment, and dispatched them to St. Asaph.

CHAP. V.

COTTAGE EDUCATION.

LADY Douglas soon arranged a little quiet plan for her future life; and though the easy circumstances in which Sir Eldred Trevallion's liberal bequest had placed her, would have afforded a better residence than Bloomfield, and enabled her to live in some fashion, so dear was the cottage to her heart, and so pleasing the idea of solitude, that she determined to improve and make it her abode; and by entirely devoting
her

her time to the instruction of her children, do honor to the memory of Douglas, and render them worthy of the race from which they were descended.

Reflecting that her death would reduce them to penury and dependence, she resolved to give them a liberal education; and while teaching them every accomplishment becoming their birth, the useful were not neglected.

The sword of Douglas she knew was the sole inheritance of her son; and though any other profession than arms, would have been her choice, if that had his own preference, she knew; had fatally felt, resistance vain. Virtue and indigence being the portion of her daughter, she was early taught to cherish the one as a treasure more valuable than life, and to support the other with modest dignity. "You may be," she would say to Elinor, "subjected to the designs of the bad, and the insolence of the vain, yet be
not

not discouraged : while blest with conscious rectitude, a sacred shield defends you—and the heart which can offer insult to innocence distressed, is beneath even scorn. Beware how you indulge pride ; in the great and opulent it is disgusting and criminal, but in the poor and wretched, ridiculous and contemptible. The meek and humble spirit, like the bending shrub, glides quietly through the storm of bleak adversity. Heaven sustaining, and the good approving it merits reverence, and meets with love. Mark then the haughty soul—proud of imagined excellence, it arrogates virtues and demands submission ; these claims are ever rejected, contemned by mankind, and disdained by Heaven ; when the mind bursting with the rage and rancour of disappointed pride, the most malignant passions gain admission, and it becomes an habitation fit for demons.

“ As you value tranquillity, discourage the first inclination to petulance and passion. A propensity once indulged, can hardly ever be controuled

controuled. - And remember, when your mother can no more direct you, that temper in a great measure shapes the fate. An influence is felt, and destiny accused; when, if many evils were traced to their source, it would be found that pride, petulance, and passion had only produced their natural effects, and that fortune was entirely blameless."

Lady Douglas had little difficulty in forming the minds and manners of her children. Nature had given them excellent dispositions, with hearts yielding to every generous impression. Her son was brave, gentle, benevolent, and humane; his sentiments were noble, his sense refined, and his manners prepossessing. Yet his passions were very quick—he would listen to entreaty, and yield to persuasion, but haughtily resisted, the least appearance of compulsion, or command. He loved his mother with the warmest affection, and perfectly adored his young sister. Elinor Douglas was not a regular beauty;

beauty ; her figure was rather pleasing than graceful, and her features more soft and interesting, than strikingly beautiful ; her complexion delicately fair, and the whole countenance beamed with the sweetest sensibility. Gentleness and vivacity, were most happily blended in her disposition, while her mind was indeed the residence of every mild and feminine virtue.

Such were the children of Douglas. Nature had done her part ; and the forming hand of an excellent mother trained them early to perfection. In that employment, the only pleasure left the unfortunate Lady Douglas, several years past at the cottage of Bloomfield. The morning dawned, the evening closed, summer displayed its cheerful beauties, and wintry tempests shook the lowly cot ; and these were the only revolutions that varied the scene ; for they lived secluded and unknown, save by the humble and unhappy, until Sir Lionel had attained his eleventh year, when, sensible at that age
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he required instructions which a mother was unable to impart, she placed him at a public school, celebrated for the great characters it had produced; but reluctant to part with the mild Elinor from beneath her own eye, and trembling lest she should imbibe any of those dangerous and fatal follies, too often learned in modern seminaries, at a considerable expence she engaged masters to attend her at home. The docile Elinor made a rapid progress in all those elegant accomplishments which distinguish the well educated woman; and when reason dawning on understanding first receives indelible impressions, Lady Douglas inculcated those principles of piety, rectitude, and female honor, which sustained her daughter in many hours of anguish, rendered her an ornament to her sex, and made her bless the precepts, and venerate the memory of a mother when mouldering in the grave.

It was a custom with this amiable lady to ramble with her daughter every morning in
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an extensive forest, which sheltered the cottage behind from the northern blasts : a hill rising with an easy ascent bounded the wood, from which a view of noblemen's seats, ruined hamlets, fruitful fields, and a river flowing smoothly through the valley, that in some places divided into streams, and in others spread in large sheets of water, rendered the prospect truly picturesque. Lady Douglas made it the scene of instruction, and by pointing out the various beauties and benefits of nature, inspired the young mind of Elinor with sublime ideas of the great Creator ; taught her a happy dependence on his goodness, and conveyed also an useful lesson in natural philosophy. Here she would often describe, the many severe calamities incident to human life, enumerate the many dangers and temptations, to which youth is exposed ; and by relating the sorrows of her life, and dwelling on the worth of Douglas, give her an example of resignation.

Elinor

Elinor would listen till trembling with emotion; and clasping the neck of her mother, she would exclaim, "Oh my mother! how great your love for Lionel and me, to live after such a loss! Why was I deprived of knowing such a father?" "Hush, my child," cried she; "I meant to teach you submission to Almighty Wisdom; repress then, unavailing murmurs, and rest contented with decrees which spared your bosom the severe regrets, and anguish which I have felt."

It was in one of these morning excursions that deeply interested with their subject, they wandered beyond their accustomed limits, and were overtaken by a violent thunder storm. Elinor terrified, flew to her mother for protection, who mildly reproving her weakness, pointed out the folly of yielding to terror, even in danger; when, if Heaven designed our destruction, a thought was sufficient, to reduce the world to atoms.—
"Behold," continued she, "how harmlessly
the

the flash descends ! the thunder rolls indeed tremendous, but it is commissioned, and cannot reach the heaven-defended breast : the innocent, my child, are ever safe, may always repose upon Almighty goodness ; while the wicked, from self-accusing, self-condemning conscience, tremble even in security.

The rain had fallen in torrents ; Lady Douglas was wet through, and on entering the cottage was seized with cold shiverings, which being succeeded by a fever, confined her to bed many days. Her frame, enfeebled by past sorrow, could ill support the rude shock on her constitution ; and the physicians apprehending a decline, ordered easy travelling and to drink goat's milk. Regard for her beloved children, whom she knew looked up to her, as their sole dependence, induced her to promise compliance on the return of Sir Lionel, who was soon expected for the summer vacation. In a very few days after, blooming in health, and
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all the vivacity of youth, she pressed him to her maternal bosom ; and having made some necessary arrangements, she hired a post-chaise, and set out on a month's tour to the mountains of Wales.

CHAP. VI.

AN ADVENTURE.

DURING the first stages of their journey, Lady Douglas forgot her indifposition in contemplating the improvements of her son. His features had acquired a more manly expression, his stature was in-

creased, and his conversation was highly amusing, if not instructive—to his sister it was really so, who with pleasing emulation endeavoured to convey her ideas to him in French, a language in which she had made a rapid progress. With innocent pride he assumed importance, by paying the turnpikes, leading his mother and Elinor from the carriage, and paying a pleasing attention to every little circumstance that could any way promote their comfort and convenience. Highly gratified in the charming children, their mother enjoyed the sereneest hours she had known since the loss of Douglas.

In crossing the passage which divides Gloucestershire from Wales, her ladyship suffered very severe sickness; but after a night's repose felt much refreshed, and in tolerable spirits.

A view of the Cambrian Mountains rising with bold magnificence, and a beautiful river winding silent and slow in some parts, and in others

others bursting over broken rocks, forming grand, and natural cascades, struck the mind with pleasing awe; while the ancient ruins of many stately castles, the valour of whose founders was forgotten, and their very names buried in the wreck of ages, proclaimed the vanity of earthly grandeur. "These were the reputed regions of inspiration," said Lady Douglas to her children, "where holy men in former times retired from an alluring world; and having dedicated all their days to Heaven, their prayers, it is said, brought gracious answers down to sooth the cares, and teach the mind of unenlightened man. These druids, studying nature, and the effects of plants and herbs, compleated many surprising cures; which in that darkened age were imputed miracles; in the more remote countries, the people still retain a large portion of their ancient superstition, attributing to certain springs very miraculous influence. —They have also their tutelar saints, observe prognostics, and religiously celebrate several festivals.—Notwithstanding these

weaknesses, they possess many virtues, are brave to a degree of rashness,—warm in their attachments,—but vindictive in resentment, and passionate in temper. The country was once famed for hospitality,—but of late years, —various impositions having been practised on the people, by designing strangers, they have acquired a very competent share of suspicion, with which, under the name of caution, they indiscriminately judge most foreigners, (for so they term the English) who come to reside among them.”

By thus blending instruction with entertainment, Lady Douglas rendered the journey delightful to the children, who highly gratified, felt displeased when the carriage stopt at A———, for the night; next morning they resumed their tour towards B——shire, over the worst roads in the whole principality:—during their abode there, what was the concern, and astonishment of Lady Douglas to behold, those ordained and set apart for the most sacred offices, and dignified

dignified with the name of Clergymen, reduced so low, as to be obliged to sell a pint of ale, and keep paltry little shops! and how shocking to the mind of humanity to see others, degrading the character, and subjecting it to disrepute, and even reproach, by irreverence through the week, and only distinguishing the seventh day, by more disgraceful excesses.—Disgusted with these circumstances she hastened her departure, but not before a fortunate chance, introduced her to the acquaintance of the reverend Mr. M—n, rector of L—, near Abergavenny. She found him liberal,—unsuspecting and humane, hospitable without ceremony, attentive without formality, and pious without ostentation.

To the perfect satisfaction of Sir Lionel and his sister, her Ladyship pursued her journey, thro' the beautiful vale of Glamorgan; uniting with her children in admiration, at the rich and luxuriant variety around them.

They were approaching the boundaries of

South Wales, when a magnificent pile of buildings attracting their notice, an inquiry was made to whom it belonged ;—at the inn where they stopt for refreshment, they were informed it was the Abbey of St. Asaph,—a sigh of tender remembrance, burst from the bosom of Lady Douglas, as she stopt the elocation of her hostess, who was proceeding in a long string of family anecdotes, not greatly to the honour of Sir Hugh Trevalion, by desiring dinner might be instantly served.——

Lady Douglas soon bade adieu to the parish of St. Asaph, and having derived unexpected benefit from the excursion, and Sir Lionel's holidays being nearly expired, she was returning to Bloomfield, when an accident detained her for some time. The postillion, driving with careless precipitancy down a rugged declivity, overturned the carriage.

The weather being intensely hot, fortunately

nately the glasses were down, Lady Douglas escaped unhurt, and Elinor with a trifling bruise, but poor Lionel having received a severe wound on his head, from which issued an alarming stream of blood, lay perfectly insensible.—The distracted mother, having with difficulty extricated herself, flew to support him, shrieking to the postillion to summon immediate aid; but the fellow totally stunned by the fall, was unconscious of his condition.—Lady Douglas had in vain, made every effort to recover her son, and was yielding to all the horrors of despair; when a little girl approached, and in the most pitying accents demanded if she could serve them.—

“ Oh, yes,” cried her Ladyship wildly, “ yes, water and assistance, for my expiring darling.”—

“ My father’s cottage is very near,” replied the child, “ and my brother shall come directly.”—In a few minutes she re-

turned with a young man, who carefully carried Sir Lionel, his mother and sister following with almost fainting steps.

They soon arrived at a poor lonely hut, perfectly clean tho' with every appearance of penury ; it was sweetly romantic, but seemed remote from the whole habitable world, however, in less than an hour the youth entered with a surgeon, who examining Sir Lionel's head, declared there was no danger, and to prevent any fever ensuing ordered him repose and quit.

When a little recovered, Lady Douglas began to consider the cottage and its inhabitants, who had rendered her such humane services, with all the cheerfulness of untaught benevolence.

The family consisted of an old man and his wife, a son, and the lively little girl, who so kindly had relieved the distress of Lady Douglas.—She appeared to be about nine
years

years old, very delicately formed, and had the sweetest voice imaginable.—Nothing could surpass the brilliancy of her eyes, and the softened loveliness of her features, the bloom of health painted her cheek, and a profusion of light brown hair shaded her face, and hung in natural ringlets over her shoulders; her dress was of the poorest materials, and her little hands were hard thro' daily labour; whether it was her fortunate appearance in the moment of helpless anguish, or the prepossessing sweetness of the child, Lady Douglas could not determine, but she felt herself secretly attached, and her heart impatient to promote her welfare.

The hospitable old couple, with a world of frankness, spread their frugal repast, consisting of bacon, new eggs, and very small ale; the old woman being somewhat lame, Lady Douglas was attended by the assiduous little Jennet, who transported with her employment, made a thousand mistakes and blunders, which meeting reproof from her

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mother,

mother, her Ladyship declared she never was so agreeably attended, nor beheld so charming a child in her life. Jennet was dropping a simple courtesey expressive of the grateful glow within, when Sir Lionel raising his head from the pillow, exclaimed, "indeed Mamma, you are right, for all the pain of my broken head, could not prevent me gazing at her;"—Elinor joined with her brother's praise, while the old man declaring the girl would grow too proud, was interrupted by his son, saying, few had a greater right, for Jennet Aprieu was as good as she was pretty; Sir Lionel a little easy, entreated leave to sit up, when his sister and Jennet endeavoured to divert him.

The old man withdrew to the barn, the woman dropt asleep, and the son being dispatched by Lady Douglas, to the neighbouring village for provisions, her grateful heart was meditating how to reward her entertainers, and benefit her favourite, when after having turned her bounty into every form benevo-

benevolence could mould,—she determined to present them a little purse, and take Jennet home, if they could be prevailed on to accede to the proposal.

Several days elapsed before the surgeon, would allow his patient, to hazard the motion and fatigue of travelling;—with much politeness, he had made an offer of his own house, for the accommodation of her Ladyship, but she gratefully declined it, and indeed was so perfectly pleased with the honest simplicity of the Aprieus; the neatness of the humble hut,—and the artless attentions of Jennet, that not one heavy hour marked her sejour at Llanwillay.

There she contemplated nature in its simplest state, and there her wishes met a pleasing deference, uncontaminated by designing adulation;—humanity appeared the leading trait, in these poor people's character,—and tho' their poverty could only be exceeded by their honesty, she had seen them when they little supposed it, sparing a slice from

their brown loaf, to a wandering half famished beggar.

The day of departure was drawing near, when one morning that Lady Douglas, desired to speak alone with Aprieu and his wife, and Elinor, engaged taking a sketch of the cottage with her pencil ;—Sir Lionel, as he reclined on the bed, observed Jennet very earnestly employed, and demanded what she was doing?—“ Making a necklace,” replied she, continuing her work,—“ a necklace, Jennet, of hair? come hither and I will enable you to get a prettier one.” “ I thank you, sir,” resumed the sweet girl modestly,—“ but I don’t think you can, and I am sure, never one that I shall love so well.”—“ Indeed !” said Sir Lionel, “ pray Jennet whose hair may it be, that you so highly value ?— It is,”—she stopt, “ pray, sir, don’t be angry ! it is your’s” “ Angry, dear girl,” cried he,—“ heavens ! but tell me lovely little Jennet, how did you get it without my knowledge ?” “ Please you, sir, I saved it
when

when the Doctor was throwing it into the fire."—" And why did you save it, Jenet?" " Because it was so pretty, and I loved it." " Thou art a fascinating creature," cried he, " come nearer Jenet;"—the little innocent approached him, holding the hair and saying, with a supplicating look, " and will you take it from me?" " Never, charming child," replied he, " pressing her blushing cheek to his lips, never, nor ever cease to remember, and love such a testimony of artless affection."

The entrance of Lady Douglas, followed by the family, prevented more being said, when with the most benignant smiles, and softest accents, she demanded of her favourite, if she could leave her parents, and live with her and Elinor.—" Oh, dear, yes, Ma'am," replied she, " and if you will sometimes let me see my father and mother,—I shall be so happy!—for I love you indeed! and Miss,—and every one."—The cheeks of Sir Lionel flushed with pleasure, but he remained,

mained silent,—Elinor was wild at the thoughts of having a companion; Lady Douglas enjoyed her own benevolent reflections, and the old people rejoiced, in having found such a friend for their little girl, who would give her learning, “for indeed the “master said, she had parts, and got her lesson sooner than any of them, and since, added they, we are to see Jennet once a year,—why as it is for her good, may the Lord bless her and the Lady, for she is a perfect angel,—and made us happy enough.”

Here ceased the old couple, while Jennet in preparing breakfast did more mischief among the crockery, than she had during the whole ten years of her life:—all were pleased, every heart contented, except the old man’s son, who absolutely blubbered at the thought of his sister’s departure;—amidst the general happiness, Sir Lionel’s received an additional zest, from observing his hair neatly plaited, and fastened round the neck of Jennet,—he was certainly pleased,—and tho’ too young,

young, to perfectly know why,—did not much care to ask his mother to explain his feelings.

Early next morning her Ladyship,—her children,—and blooming little charge, left the cottage of Llanwillay, amidst the prayers and blessings of old Aprieu and his wife,—and after a pleasant journey, without accident or adventure, arrived safely at Bloomfield.—Jennet gazed with delighted admiration, at the elegance around her,—and when her benefactress led her to Elinor's apartment, and kissing her, said she should be instructed to use the books, pencils, and piana forte; joy, gratitude, and pleasure, flushed her lovely features.

In a few days Sir Lionel returned to school, but not before he had presented Jennet, with a locket, to hang at her necklace. Lady Douglas past many well satisfied hours, in forming the mind of her favourite, and as Elinor required less attention, to the more inferior parts of education, it engaged her
3 ideas,

ideas, and prevented them wandering to forbidden subjects.

Nothing could exceed the sweetness of Jennet's disposition, or the brilliancy of her understanding;—her sense, far beyond her years, soon taught her the magnitude of her obligations to her patroness, and while meek, humble, and obliging to all,—her she worshipped with a reverence, little inferior to that she had seen her parents offer their tutelary saint.—Elinor honoured her with a large portion of regard, and treated her with that condescension and affability, which she had been ever taught to pay merit, in what ever condition she found it.—She received instructions from Elinor's masters,—shared all her amusements, and if any trifling disappointment had afflicted the one,—so fondly were they attached,—it was yet more severely felt by the other.—The affection of Lady Douglas increased daily,—and if ever she discovered any inclination to gaiety, it was when the sparkling wit, and innocent vivacity of Jennet

net Aprieu, were exerted to make her smile, —as the cultivating hand of education improved her mind, she discovered sentiments at once noble, and refined, her temper was generous and sincere, and her benefactress had the pleasure to reflect, that she had preserved an amiable girl, from ignorance and wretchedness, who would do honour to her predilection.—Jennet soon learnt that education was her sole dependance, and Lady Douglas having given her's a very domestic turn, she was accomplished for any condition, in which fate might cast her.

Several years now past at Bloomfield, without any incident worth relating having occurred,—Sir Lionel regularly came home every vacation, and Jennet had made her parents two visits, not forgetting from the bounty of Lady Douglas, to always leave a consolation for her departure.

CHAP. VII.

TWO STRANGERS INTRODUCED.

PREVIOUS to Sir Lionel quitting Harrow School, he entreated his mother's permission, to introduce two young gentlemen at Bloomfield, who had honoured him with distinguished friendship, and for whom he felt the sincerest regard.—To gratify the innocent wishes of her children, being the sole delight of this widowed mother, she yielded instant compliance, and prepared the cottage for their reception.—Sir Lionel had

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now entered his eighteenth year, his soul enriched with all the virtues that ever graced humanity, while his external appearance, left not even envy herself a fault to discover. He had not been at Bloomfield for one year, and his mother's heart throbbed with violence, at the idea of his claiming a father's sword.

She trembled also for Elinor, now blooming in all the pride of virtue and loveliness, when she considered that her sole support, depended on the brittle tenure of her existence. The condition of her favourite too, claimed many an anxious thought, and she almost regretted, having drawn her from her native mountains and contented penury, when she reflected on the various dangers, to which unprotected beauty is exposed, in a cruel and designing world. These incessant agitations had deeply affected her health; her spirits fled, and presaging fears were again overwhelming her, when the arrival of Sir Lionel and his friends, for a time diverted her attention.

tention. He embraced his mother, with all that warmth of affection he ever felt, and fondly kissing his sister, complimented her on the improvement of her appearance; he was then turning to offer his devoirs to Jennet, but struck with the surprising loveliness, and dignity of her whole figure, saluted her with such visible embarrassment, that the poor girl, unconscious of his emotion, shrunk from his embrace, and retreated in confusion.—Recovering himself he, presented his friends to his mother and sister, who returned their compliments, with that easy elegance peculiar to good breeding.

The two young gentlemen introduced at Bloomfield, were the only surviving children of Mr. Montague, a rich and powerful civilian in Bengal.—At a very early age they were sent to England for education, and consigned to the care of Mr. Hammond, a respectable banker in London.—They were some years older than Sir Lionel, but on their first meeting at Harrow, from a similarity

city of sentiment, and a mutual wish to oblige, they were united in the strictest bands of amity.—Clement Montague, the eldest,—had many virtues, an excellent understanding,—and an elegant figure, but an unrestrained vivacity, was perpetually leading him into errors, and occasioned regrets, which a moment's reflection might have prevented.

Having a large command of money, and except the few hours under the controul of his teachers, the perfect direction of himself; unhappily all his passions had unlimited indulgence; yet he was generous,—open,—and good natured, and soon stood very high in the favour of Lady Douglas, his heart paid almost instant homage to the mild graces of Elinor, and disdaining the concealment of a thought, with all that impatience and candor, peculiar to his nature, he disclosed his attachment in the most energetic terms.

The blushing Elinor confessed a mutual esteem, Sir Lionel was a powerful advocate
for

for his friend, but Lady Douglas, pleading the absolute necessity of a parent's sanction, gave the proposal a positive negative, until Mr. Montague's pleasure should be known.

Henry Montague equally felt the power of Elinor's attractions, yet such was the gentleness of his heart,—and the modesty of his manners,—on his brother addressing her, he resolved to resign his pretensions, and suffer in silence,—he had the sincerest affection for Clement, but knowing the volatility of his disposition, in tender regard to the peace of Elinor, he exulted in the denial Lady Douglas gave their wishes, as it would afford her longer time to consider his temper, judge how far her own could yield obedience to his will, and also discover to his own heart, the strength and nature of his passion.

CHAP. VIII.

JENNET'S CONFLICT.

WHILE matters were thus situated with Elinor and her admirers, — the heart of poor Jennet was struggling, with the severe conflict of love and duty. — The attachment between her and Sir Lionel had been mutual, and progressive from the first moment they beheld each other. She felt the immense distance, between the son of her benefactress, and the daughter of a poor wretched cottager; and when she reflected on the boundless debt, she owed that beloved friend for all her care, tenderness, condescension, and benefits,

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an agony of passion, would shake her grateful bosom, and almost derange her reason.

Douglas had long unconsciously adored her, but neither knew the nature nor extent of his feelings, until he fancied her wondrous beauty had attracted the admiration of Henry Montague; previous to that, the pride of birth, the noble blood of Douglas, and above all, the anguish he supposed such a proposal would occasion his declining mother, whispered the dictates of prudence; but no sooner was a jealous fear awakened, than every voice was hushed,—every consideration forgotten, and with a heart, beating tumultuously with varied passions, he fell at her feet, confessed his love, implored her compassion, and vowed eternal constancy; alarmed at an agitation and vehemence, which she had never witnessed before, she conjured him to rise, and not distress her with a posture so unbecoming to the dependant of his mother; “never,” cried he, wringing her hands, “never Jennet, till I know my fate,
—till

—till you swear indifference,—hatred, towards young Montague.”—“ Alas !” said she mildly, “ what misleads you ? why hate the man, who never has offended, who good and generous like yourself.”——

“ Ingrateful, fickle Jennet,” interrupted he passionately, “ to disdain a long adoring, faithful heart, for one of yesterday almost unknown.”—“ Unkind Sir Lionel, to wrong me with suspicion,” replied she, bursting into tears, “ I never thought of him, but as your friend.” “ Loved girl !” cried he, “ say so again,---then oh, be kinder still, accept a heart that holds you dearer than the wealth of worlds, that feels no happiness, but in your smiles, and vows to never wed another.”---“ Oh, forbear,” replied the afflicted girl, trembling with agitation, “ forbear to tempt the wretched Jennet, to forsake her duty, who kneeling here before the throne of heaven, in deep contrition, owns she has presumed to love, and raised above herself, must, beggar like, forget her meanness in im-

proper pride. Yet still the precepts, of my bright instructress shall not be forsaken, then hear,—oh thou, most precious to the soul of Jenet! hear my fixed determination,”—
“Jenet,” interrupted he, “beware of vows! nor drive me on to desperation.”

“Spare me,” cried she, sinking on her knees,—“my anguished mind is bursting with its conflict,—but hear me,—and let reason plead,—consider what I am,—consider what I owe your gracious mother.—Her bounty rescued me from ignorance and want, her kindness ranked me, with the first of human beings,—even with her own loved family; her charity supports my aged parents,—and am I not the creature of her goodness?—cherished by her benefits,—honored with her care,—trusted by her generous soul! And shall I, under the sacred mask of innocence, plant the dagger of affliction in her compassionating, unsuspecting bosom, disappoint her brilliant expectations,—and contaminate the noble blood of Douglas, with a
low

low born wretched peasant's? no, though poor and humble, my soul is still superior to such abject guilt; then cease to urge a deed, that would degrade me far beneath myself, beneath my own contempt;—even you would soon disdain a wretch, whom gratitude could not restrain, and I could never suffer your upbraiding.—Oh, Douglas! then in pity to my varied anguish,—in compassion to a faithful heart, that vows to never know a love but thine, disturb no more my peace, nor shake a fortitude I so much need,—and since we never must again converse in private,—deign to believe, since first these almost infant eyes beheld thee,—my heart confessed thy wondrous worth,—loved thee with the purest passion,—and had I worlds, would lay them at thy feet; but since my lowly fate has cast me far beneath thy greatness, I will ever worship thee at humble distance, and weary heaven with prayers for thy safety, and thro' the various evils I may know in this rude world, thro' pain, humiliation, want, affliction, even death itself, the dear remembrance of thy

cherished love, will give serenity, and cheer my sorrowing hours."——

"No," exclaimed Douglas, when his strong emotions allowed even feeble expression,—“no Jennet, I will not degrade you,—never disturb your peace, nor subject you to self reproach,—I go,—far from Jennet's cruelty, far from that heroism which deprives my mother of her son,—no,—Jennet never loved like me,—never knew one pang like those that rend my desolate rejected heart; else these cold sentiments had never triumph'd; yet fare thee well Jennet! fare thee well!”—The last word lingered on his lips, while with an air of wild dejection, he rushed from the room. The spirits of Jennet were forsaking her, and she was falling from the chair, when Elinor and Mr. Montague entered and saved her.

Pleading indisposition, she immediately retired to her chamber, when a violent flood of tears a little relieved her swelling heart;
“duty

“duty thou hast triumphed,” exclaimed she, “and oh, may the promised blessing, be vouchsafed; may this poor bosom be restored to peace, and my loved benefactress never know its secret pangs!”

During several days Sir Lionel shunned her with the nicest care, and when obliged to be near her, behaved with the most chilling reserve or perfect indifference,—sometimes would assume an air of haughty gaiety, and without the appearance of design, place her next Henry Montague, and in all their little rural parties leave her solely to his protection. The heart of poor Jennet was unequal to support it; one moment she would bless him, and think it happy he no longer loved her;—but soon remembrance of their many peaceful days, when he devoted every hour to please and wait upon her, would rush upon her softened mind, and all but love and Douglas was forgotten.

Restless and uneasy one morning she arose

early, and leaving Elinor asleep descended to the garden, hoping by air and exercise to dissipate a melancholy, which neither a conscious adherence to duty, nor reason could surmount.—Crossing a little shrubbery, she encountered Mr. Henry Montague, who invited by the fineness of the morning had purposed a solitary ramble;—observing Jennet appear very languid, in a voice of pitying respect, he offered the support of his arm.

When the mind is under the pressure of affliction, every indulgence tends to soften it, and tho' the offer of Henry, was simply that of an amiable good nature, it affected the heart of Jennet, a tear started in her eye,—and she leant her trembling hand upon his arm, when an opening in the forest, discovered Sir Lionel with his arms folded, his looks fixed on the earth, and his head resting on a blighted tree;—at their approach he started from his reverie, and casting a scornful glance on Jennet was retiring, when Henry unconscious of offence, requested he would

would join them in their walk.—“ No, I would not be thought impertinent,” replied he, viewing him superciliously, “ nor obtrude on private assignations, adieu !”—Henry stood immovable, while Jennet trembling with agony, and indifferent to all but her lover, with frantic tenderness, grasped his hands, crying,—“ stay, stay, my Douglas,”—but regardless of her distress, he disdainfully repulsed her feeble hold, saying,—“ false,—perfidious ! you can no more impose on Douglas, practise your arts on others, while unknown they may succeed.” He then irresolutely retreated, most likely would have returned, but looking, beheld Jennet, who had fainted, leaning on the breast of Henry with his arms around her, and darting into the forest, was out of sight in a moment.

The innocent Jennet was soon restored, to a recollection of her condition, and being sensible that a causeless jealousy darkened the mind of Sir Lionel, was debating whether it would not be more conducive to his peace,

to let him remain under the impresson of her inconstancy, than by withdrawing the veil of delusion, convince him she was as faithful as unfortunate. During this her internal struggle,—the generous Henry was kindly supporting her to the cottage, and at length exclaimed in accents of regret, “good God! have I done this,—yet be composed dear injured Jennet, I will seek my friend,—and bring him contrite to your feet.”—“No,” cried she, “no Mr. Montague, attempt it not,—’tis proper he should cease to love,—’tis right he should disdain me,—yet I can ill endure his scorn and anger,—wretched Jennet! why didst thou ever leave thy father’s hovel,—why rescued from thy native ignorance, to learn refinements, which occasion sorrow?” These words brought them to the parlour, where they found all except Sir Lionel assembled to breakfast.

The pale looks of Jennet alarmed Lady Douglas, and she tenderly inquired if she was ill, she replied, a lowness had seized her
in

in the garden, but she now felt much recovered.

The repast was nearly over when the baronet entered,—his mother viewing him with penetrating earnestness said, while her words conveyed a peculiar meaning,—“ You appear Lionel infected with Jennet’s lowness, have you been companions this morning ?”

“ No, Madam,” returned he, unable to suppress his feelings, even in her presence, “ Miss Aprieu was more happily engaged.” Poor Jennet was sinking with confusion, when Elinor to relieve her embarrassment, asked her opinion of some new music ;—Lady Douglas sat musing, while Mr. Montague taking the arm of Sir Lionel retired,—and was soon followed by Henry.

During the day, Sir Lionel complained of a violent head ach,—and before the close of evening, was attended to bed in a high fever, raving on the names of Jennet and Henry,—calling her false, cruel and ungrateful, and

accusing him of betraying his friendship, and supplanting his love,—Lady Douglas, Elinor and Jennet never left him, and while her Ladyship was mourning over his bed, and vainly attempting to sooth his frenzy, Jennet, unable to articulate, would fall at her feet, and look up wildly expressive in her face; Lady Douglas would press her hands, saying, “rise poor Jennet, I pity,—do not blame you.”

During the illness of Sir Lionel, the meek spirit of Elinor had been entirely depressed, but for the attention of her adoring Clement, who still more endeared himself to her heart, by all those delicate tenderesses, so sweetly felt but never to be expressed.

Henry's affliction was only to be exceeded by Jennet's, for Sir Lionel yielding to the force of jealousy, had refused every explanation. At length, to the relief of all, he was pronounced out of danger, and being in a few days able to sit up, fearful of recalling un-

unpleasant images to remembrance, and perhaps occasion a relapse, Jennet carefully avoided his chamber; but sickness had restored him to a degree of reflection, reason became his monitor, and in idea he beheld his wronged Jennet, arrayed in all her native loveliness, with truth, innocence and tenderness beaming from her eyes, mourning his illness, while she lamented and blessed a man, who had suspected, forsaken---and spurned her in the moment of unutterable anguish, even in the moment that her generous soul, rising superior to the feelings of humanity, was acting from the noblest motives,—resigning peace and every dearer wish, because opposed to his imagined welfare.—Such indeed were his sensations, that nothing but the alarming state of his beloved mother's health, who appeared fast declining, could have prevented him imploring her consent to their union, on which he felt, depended his every hope of happiness.

He had asked the forgiveness of Henry

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for

for his unjust suspicions, pleading the excess of his passion for Jenet, and his agony at her firm refusal of his hand. In the generous breast of his friend the offence was unremembered, and in terms of the highest admiration, he related her unequalled greatness of mind in wishing to remain suspected, and deemed unworthy his regard, that his regret might be lessened at her rejection of his VOWS.

One day that Elinor, Mr. Montague, and his brother, had walked to the neighbouring village, Lady Douglas retiring to write letters requested Jenet to take a book and divert Sir Lionel. The heart of Jenet beat quick at receiving the unexpected command, for her Ladyship had always appeared pleased, when she declined attending them to his apartment,—however to conceal her emotion, she instantly obeyed with assumed composure.—A bright glow suffused her cheeks, as she approached him, saying, “ I come, sir, by the command of my benefactress to attend

tend you, until her Ladyship is unengaged."

"Beautiful Jennet!" replied he, pressing her hand to his heart, "conscious transgression tells me, it must indeed be her command that brings you here: yet say my gentle, condescending girl,—can you accept my deep contrition? Yes, you will,—for I am fallen so very low,—beneath almost resentment,—so much inferior."—"Forbear, sir, this humility, I beseech," interrupted she, "it is equally distressing with your late mistake,—I claim no right to be offended,—nor feel a pleasure in your condescension,—yet to pretend indifference, after the confessions I have made, would be an affectation I disdain,—my vows are yours,—my heart unaltered,—yet, to restrain your long imprudent hopes, I now resolve to shun all converse with you, that is not sanctioned with your mother's leave. I have much reason to suppose, that she suspects my too presumptuous love, but greater sorrow shall
her

her generous bosom, never feel from Jennet's conduct." Sir Lionel was prevented replying, by the entrance of his sister and friends, who being soon followed by her Ladyship, the conversation became general.

CHAP. IX.

THE indisposition of Lady Douglas, in a little time became so very alarming, that in compliance with the entreaties of her family, and the advice of a physician, she repaired to Bath attended by her children, Mr. Montague and his brother. Her disorder proving a deep decline, soon baffled the power of

of medicine,—and one evening, with the sweetest serenity, she prepared her family for the awful moment, which she felt approaching.

“ I am not to learn my beloved boy,” said the excellent mother to Sir Lionel, “ that you design to follow the profession of your noble father, and I reverence that divine mercy which calls me to eternal rest, before your entrance in a line which hath ever proved destructive to my peace,—yet go my child,—and shouldst thou even meet a father’s fate,—fall in a foreign land,—lay undistinguished in the common dust, without a stone to mark the lowly spot, still shall the guardians of the brave watch your loved relics, and glory crown your name with never fading honours.—but be your fate far happier! and heaven give you an old age of peace! And now my son, in these last moments of my weary pilgrimage, when vanity withdraws her veil, and virtue shines the only real good, I give the humble Jennet to your arms,
long

long my heart has wavered between the pride of birth and Jennet's excellence,—long I have beheld your mutual passion, and wonder not my loved,—exalted Jennet, that I approve,—and give you to my Lionel with blessings.—Your sentiments ennoble more than all the blood of Douglas; I have seen your conflict, start not,—heard your rejection of his love and vows, from tenderness and gratitude to me, and from that hour determined to reward your virtues. Yet my children, be counselled by my care,—and tho' you have my sanction to unite,—delay it,—until competence can cheer your dwelling, for trust me, indigence oft weakens conjugal attachment, and the voice of tenderness is rarely heard in the abodes of want;—but grant the passion proves superior to adversity, how distressing to a generous mind, to behold the dearest upon earth, meekly enduring poverty, and without complaint or murmur, sustaining that contempt a cruel world gives it!—yield not then to the illusions of passion, and by dignifying it with
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the sacred name of love, convert it to a bane ; —be but governed by prudence, and your guiltless affection will prove the blessing of your future days.”

The lovers emotions may be better imagined than described, surprise, love, joy, gratitude, and even sorrow struggled within, and denied them utterance.—while her Ladyship, joining their hands, and blessing them with pious fervor, added,—“ be composed, my Elinor now demands attention,”—she was interrupted by Clement Montague, who kneeling by her bed,—implored her to fix a time for *his* nuptials with the beloved Elinor.

“ Rise my dear sir,” replied she, “ and be assured, the happiness of him my child approves, must interest my heart,—I need not say that I regard you,—and respect your virtues, when I resign my darling to your care ; take her then Clement from a dying mother’s hand,—she will prove the treasure
of

of your life, when every other good may fail you, cherish her tender years,—be faithful, for she loves you, and as you keep your vows, may heaven bless you!—but that I feel my days draw near a close, I would lengthen the period of your wishes, that you might attain that knowledge of each other, so very necessary to insure mutual agreement, but since death interdicts my will, and Elinor will want protection, you may name your day.”—The gentle girl threw herself into her mother’s arms, while Mr. Montague appeared enraptured.

“Be not transported,” said Lady Douglas calmly,—“but remember,—like yourself she is imperfect, and that marriage dispelling all enchantment of the senses, will discover unexpected failings, do not then adore now,—and tyrannize afterwards; but let your love be rational and lasting, unite the monitor and friend in the husband, encourage her virtues,—and mildly reprove her weaknesses,—she has not many, for her heart
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is gentle and her nature noble, these,—the honor of a father,—and the precepts of a mother are her only boast, and yet I do not fear your parent's approbation of that portion,—the name of Douglas cannot be unknown, nor can his daughter be rejected." Here ceased the charming saint,—and after having shewn Clement and his brother, letters she had received from Mr. Hammond, on the subject of the nuptials, assuring her he thought Mr. Montague would perfectly approve them, she requested they would retire, and leave her to repose as she felt weary and exhausted.

The sensations of the whole, on leaving her presence were indelible,—the bitter reflection of her approaching death, damped expected blessings, and regret saddened the joys which they knew her impending loss had hastened,—melancholy darkened their pleasures, and their bosoms were torn by contending passions ;—only the amiable Henry experienced undivided sorrow,—to him
all

all was gloomy and unpromising :—the woman he loved was given to another,—to a man whom he feared was gratifying a momentary passion, without having a proper value for her gentleness and worth ;—he was losing a friend he greatly respected, and a thousand nameless dreads alarmed him.

Only a few days elapsed, before Sir Lionel, in the presence of his mother, gave Elinor to the arms of his friend, who in consideration and respect for the dying Lady Douglas, was obliged to moderate his transports,—alas ! too soon that restraint was no more,—the amiable woman, after having blest them all, and given her last directions,—amid smiles of the sereneest peace,—folding her hands,—and saying,—“ In thy protection mighty God,—I leave my children, and well pleased, hasten to share thy glories with my fainted Douglas,—vouchsafe me thy support and mercy,—yet a few remaining moments,—and all will be at rest,”—she closed her eyes and her guiltless spirit fled, to the realms of everlasting repose.

By her own desire, her remains, were conducted to the parish church of Bloomfield, where the poor inhabitants bedewed her coffin with the genuine tears of gratitude, and bitter regret.—

The family remained a very short time, at the cottage after the funeral ; every thing excepting books, music and pictures was sold, when they set out for the metropolis, casting many a lingering look behind, on the peaceful scenes of innocent and cheerful years.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

NEWS.

ON their arrival in London, Mr. Montague hired very superb apartments for his lady, and his allowance being extremely liberal, he supported her in every respect as became a daughter of the house of Douglas. She was introduced to Mr. Hammond, who treated her with all the deference she so highly merited, and had it not been for the remembered loss of an excellent mother, Elinor would have pronounced herself among the happiest of human beings.—
Some-

Sometimes indeed she felt a momentary anxiety, respecting her father-in-law, but one kind assurance from her adoring Clement,—would banish every uneasy thought, and possessing all the world in him would wonder at her murmurs.——

The charming Jennet, who at the request of Lady Douglas, was to reside with Elinor, until her own nuptials could take place, had scarce smiled since the death of her benefactress;—all her remembered tenderness would burst upon her grateful soul, and she would weep in agony on the bosom of Sir Lionel, whose delicate respect,—and endearing tenderness were her sole comforts; for she could feel no pleasure in the whirl of fashionable amusements, into which Clement constantly immersed his admired bride.

Sir Lionel having purchased an ensigncy, was ordered to Ireland,—and so softened was the heart of poor Jennet, and so painful the idea of separation, that only the recollected
counsel;

counsels of her worshipped friend prevented her yielding to the ardent wishes of her lover, that of becoming Lady Douglas, and attending him to Dublin.—The struggle was severe,—yet she conquered, and induced him to consent by promising to receive his vows at the altar, when he attained his twenty-first year,—or before, if he was ordered abroad; recommending her in the most earnest manner, to the care of Mr. Montague, and the kindness of his sister, after settling a regular correspondence with the whole, he joined his regiment the day he completed his nineteenth year.

Henry Mountague for various reasons, declined his brother's invitation of residing in his family, and continued with Mr. Hammond anxiously awaiting his father's pleasure, as only for Clement's marriage they had that season both returned to India.

Elinor was advancing in her pregnancy, and suffered severe indisposition,—Jennet
watched

watched her languid hours with the softest care,—and indeed was become almost her only comfort; for tho' Mr. Montague was very tender and anxious while present,—his nature was too volatile for a sick chamber, and too gay to relinquish the fashionable diversions of the town, which indeed he pursued with rather more avidity than suited his circumstances, often being obliged to borrow from the spiritless fellow as he termed his brother.—The gentle Elinor ever accustomed to those delicate attentions, so endearing to the mind of sensibility, severely felt the indifference of her husband, often she hinted her complaints to Jennet, who wisely either changed the subject, or reminded her of a sainted mother's counsels, entreated she would restrain reproach, and encourage every appearance of returning love, with smiling good humour.—“ Ah, my Jennet,” she would say,—“ how easy to advise, who could support negligence, after the transports with which he received me, indeed, indeed it will break my heart.”

“ I believe, my dear friend,” replied Jen-net, “ that is the natural consequence,”—yet in no point suffer a husband, to think you suspect his deviation from right ; for shame being strong in a virtuous breast,—error must struggle long and hard, before it it can be conquered, or its voice silenced,—but once detected and exposed, the heart becomes indifferent, and too often yields to deeper, and deeper indiscretions.” Their conversation was interrupted, by the entrance of Clement, a tear still trembled in the eye of his wife,—yet he advanced with a careless air, saying,—“ you seem depressed Elinor, —grown a perfect mope,—prithee be more cheerful, let me attend you to the play, —“ the Way to Keep Him is to be performed.”—

Her heart was heavy, yet with assumed vivacity she consented, when her husband pleased with a compliance as unexpected, as he was conscious undeserved, exclaimed pressing her to his bosom, “ my
lovely

lovely girl is very kind,—be but always as you are now, and Clement must—adore you.—Elinor delighted with his returning tenderness, became really gay, and smiling thanks for Jenet's counsel,—dressed and accompanied him to the theatre.

Mrs. Montague's condition, very soon confined her entirely at home,—while her husband, inconsiderate as ever, pursued every expensive amusement. The birth of a daughter, for a few days engaged his attention,—but the novelty past, he returned to his accustomed pleasures. Mr. Hammond often remonstrated on the impropriety of his conduct, in all the characters he had to support, the father, husband and man;—but ever uncontrolled, he disdained his counsels, saying he was out of leading strings, and would be the judge of his own actions.

The East India fleet was however daily expected,—impatience sat at the hearts of the brothers, while Elinor, as she fondled her lit-

the infant, indulged the pleasing expectation of her father-in-law's return, or commands to rejoin him in Bengal.—

She was seated one morning, happy in her maternal employment, Jennet reading, and her husband in a musing humour, when Henry hastily entered the room,—his whole frame was agitated, his face pale,—and the traces of tears still legible on his cheeks.—Throwing himself on the sofa, he drew some letters from his pocket, and with difficulty articulated,—“my father,” he could no more,—Clement snatched the packet, and added “is dead,”—a tribute of decent sorrow being paid, they proceeded to peruse the letters which informed them, their father had bequeathed to each son, the sum of thirty thousand pounds, to be paid on their attaining the age of twenty one, and that the money would be remitted in India bonds by the next ships.

These young gentlemen remembered very
little

little of their father, so that their sorrow arose merely from those instinctive feelings, which attach a child to his parent. Yet Henry,—the gentle Henry, was deeply affected, but Clement rendered perfectly his own master, with a very liberal fortune, soon consoled himself with his own pleasurable ideas, while poor Elinor, who had promised herself the sweetest satisfaction in attending the wishes of a father, felt depressed and disappointed.

The first tumults of grief and surprise, being a little subsided, the brothers were setting out for Mr. Hammond's, when he entered the room.

Having condoled with them, on the irreparable loss of so excellent a parent, he proceeded to offer his advice, respecting their future plans in life, with all that zealous sincerity, which had distinguished his friendship for their father, and careful guardianship of themselves. Henry bowed his acknowledgements, but the haughty Clement, ever im-

patient of control, replied, "that as he was some time since of age, he would release him from every trouble on his account." Mr. Hammond felt hurt, but calmly said, "my counsels thus rejected, and my friendship scorned, shall never fir be more obtruded; yet in respect to the memory of Lady Douglas, and in regard to this charming woman and her infant, I must inform you that your marriage is illegal. From the dates mentioned in your father's will, I find we were wrong respecting your age, you had only attained twenty when united with this lady; this disclosed, love and honor require not my directions how to act.

The deepest crimson flushed the cheeks of Mr. Montague; Henry wore the hue of death, Jenet shook with agitation, and only Elinor herself appeared meekly serene, "certainly," said Clement, replying to Mr. Hammond's address, "no one can dictate in this affair, it interests myself alone." Ah! thought Henry, that it concerned not the virtuous Elinor.—

Mr.

Mr. Hammond soon arose, and kindly taking the hand of Mrs. Montague, said with an expressive look,—“Should *you*, dear Madam ever need my counsel or my aid, I shall be happy in obeying your commands, to demonstrate the sincerity of my regard,” then bowing coolly round he withdrew. A general silence prevailed, for some minutes after his departure, at length Mr. Montague taking his hat, and saying he should return to dinner, hastily left the room.—

Jennet and Henry silently threw their eyes on Elinor, seeming to penetrate her inmost thoughts,—“You expected, I doubt not,” said she, with perfect composure, “to see me agitated and unhappy at Mr. Hammond’s information, but in fact it conveys to me a degree of pleasure,—as it will display the purity of my Clement’s honor, and by convincing me of his unaltered regard, remove some anxious fears I have lately felt respecting his stability of sentiment.”—

“ May he answer your fondest hopes !” cried Henry, “ and by quieting your delicate anxieties, insure such excellence his own for ever.” “ What plan will you pursue ?” demanded Jennet.—“ What plan repeated she,” gaily, “ why even again say, I will, and obey with the most becoming grace imaginable.”—They were prevented saying more by the return of Clement, who immediately commencing an indifferent subject, was interrupted by Jennet, saying with great vivacity,—“ we have been most agreeably busy, arranging matters for the approaching festival,”—“ festival !” repeated he, affecting surprise,—“ oh a perfect jubilee,” added Jennet, “ your wedding,”—“ are you really so simple Jennet,” returned he, with something of scornful indifference in his manner, “ as to suppose, I will proclaim my wife having lived a wanton, and my child born illegitimate, to gratify the peevish punctilio of old Hammand, or in obedience to a ridiculous form,—imposed by men no wiser than myself; no, my Elinor is superior to vulgar prejudice,—

is conscious that our union is registered in heaven,—was sanctioned by the sacred presence of her mother, and,”—“ Spare your arguments, Mr. Montague,” interrupted Elinor calmly, “ and allow me to ask, if you do not by a second ceremony, subject this infant and myself to *imagined* reproach,—how will you prevent us deserving it in *reality* ?”

“ Faith Elinor,” replied he, with a perfect nonchalance, “ your cottage education, has given you such refined notions, that a man of common sense has no chance with you, therefore I yield you the argument,—but mark me, will persevere in my own opinion,—I regard you as my wife,—and while you are reasonable, and I am happy, the world cannot part us;—when either of these cease,—why we may thank the chance which has *perhaps* given us an opportunity, to be no longer bosom tormentors to each other.”

Indignant fire flashed from the eyes of
F 5 Jennet,

Jennet, while Henry gazing in agony on the silent anguish of Elinor, exclaimed, "Oh Clement, my brother! are you resolved on self-destruction,—resolved to wrong such excellence, and bring the blood of Douglas to dishonor? yet if forgetful of the sacred ties which bind the brave, the generous and the good,—if deaf to justice and compassion,—and regardless of a heart, which beats but for your happiness, which even now trembling with your inflicted pangs,—pangs too severe for utterance, is still so soft, so good, it will accept returning love and penitence, yet,—yet be warned,—reflect,—offended heaven will arm a brother's vengeance, and make the family a scene of blood, so dreadful that humanity will shudder."

"Prithee cease thy tedious cant," interrupted Clement impatiently,—“your harangue might sound admirably in a conventicle, but is much too sententious for my ears, learn also, that my nature ill supports the insolence of any, and if you henceforth restrain
not

not the licence of your tongue, I may find a way to chastise your presumption.”—“Chastise me, thou base betrayer,” said Henry, while generous anger sparkled in his eyes,—“thou who canst murder female honor, I disdain thy menace, unprincipled, contemptible deceiver!” Clement started from his seat and pale with rage, was approaching his brother in a threatening posture, when Elinor, interposed, saying,—“Cease your contention Henry, my friend! forbear attempting to redress my wrongs, they are inflicted by a heart,—within this little hour, sunk far beneath my pity, or your indignation;—you Clement was the husband of my love,—the friend I early trusted with my peace,—the approved of my mother,—and the father of my child;—these claims forgotten, I can offer nothing.—To-morrow, with innocence my comfort, and heaven my guide, I shall retire far from you,—fear no persecution from my injured feelings, or resentment, self justified, I scorn any imputed guilt, you may alledge in vindication of your own conduct,

and you may be as happy, as conscious reproach will permit; may the wife you next marry better secure a name, than has the unthinking Elinor,—and now farewell; the man without one principle of honor, and a heart without one sentiment of tenderness, I shall soon cease to regret, and like you, *may thank the chance* which impowered me to leave a bosom, that betrayed me to shame, confusion and reproach.”—She then took the arm of Jennet and retired, Henry followed, and whispering he would wait on *them*, again within an hour, left the house.

Clement was now left alone to reflection, every passion was alarmed, and struggled in his breast for victory; his love for Elinor had been violent, and tho’ those transports with which he received her had abated, he still felt a warm affection,—admired her loveliness, and revered her virtues.—The idea of separation, or rendering his union void, would have been the last of his thoughts,
and

and most remote of his wishes;—but the prospect of sudden independance, and the unexpected power chance had given him over Elinor, so intoxicated and elated his imagination, that acting with his natural pride, and desire of dominion, every amiable sentiment and generous principle was disregarded, and he resolved to treat the idea of an illegal marriage, with perfect indifference, or if obliged to argue the point, remain resolute, and plead the shame it would reflect on his wife and child, in excuse for not complying with the necessary ceremony. His motives were far from being generous; he thought to impress Elinor with ideas of his love, and generosity, in paying her unremitting attention, when she would be conscious, honor *alone* engaged his fidelity. He also conceived, that as fortune had enabled him to gratify every favorite propensity, she could arrogate no right to even offer controul to his pleasures. From the experienced meekness of her nature, he expected no opposition; her brother never entered his thoughts, and

no

no one else, who had any knowledge of his humour, he knew would venture to interfere.—

Such were the ideas that occupied him on returning home, when ever unaccustomed to contradiction, even Jennet's innocent address provoked him, his brother's interposition roused his stormy passions, and the calm indifference of Elinor stung his haughty soul.—From her he expected tenderness, humility and supplication; but he little knew that a virtuous mind; notwithstanding all the softness of feminine feelings, when the dignity of honor is insulted, can add the firmness of a heroine. Her modest beauties glowing with the pride of injured innocence,—her avowed resolve of leaving him, and her scornful pity and apparent ease on the occasion, while they mortified his vanity, and humbled his consequence, awakened the embers of his softer passions, and he feared to lose, that which he had long ceased to treat with becoming tenderness and respect. He suffered the severest conflicts,
and

and had Elinor known that his heart, even in the moment that he spurned her, confessed her charming power, many succeeding evils had been prevented; but insensible that he languished for an opportunity to yield to her wishes, and silence every delicate objection, without humbling himself to entreaty, which perhaps might be rejected, she was with an agitated frame and tortured bosom, preparing to quit his home for ever.

CHAP. XI.

NATURAL CONSEQUENCES OF A HUSBAND'S DESERTION.

TOWARDS the close of evening Henry returned, when Elinor assuming a composure, far distant from her heart, informed him

him she had with her dear Jennet, arranged a little plan for future convenience, if not comfort, and resolved to leave his brother's house next day, "and I intend," added the meek sufferer, "to prevent unhappy consequences to others, for my peace, alas! is wrecked for ever! to delude my brother, with a story of my having voluntarily separated from Mr. Montague; and I charge you Henry, by all the friendship you ever vowed poor Elinor, as you value her remaining peace, reason, or even existence, to never deceive him; also to avoid dispute with your brother, which cannot benefit me, but may, from his violence of temper, occasion fatal consequences between you, I conceal my retreat for some time."

"From me, my sister!" interrupted he sorrowfully, "from me who would resign my life, to spare you one uneasy thought."—"Wrong not my intentions, nor your own deserts," resumed she, "sensible of our mutual friendship your brother will suspect you,

—to

—to prevent contention, pray remain in ignorance,—my motive for concealment is to avoid insulting offers of his aid, which rather than accept, the coldest stone should be my dying pillow.—I take this child, that he may have no remembrance, to imbitter happier moments with a future wife; yet tell him Henry,—for he is the father of my angel,—that every stormy passion sinks to rest, that pity far exceeds my indignation,—that in remembered love, resentment is forgotten, that in my latest moments he shall have my prayers,—and when the grave has sheltered me, and all my sorrows, may the peace and blessings promised to penitence descend upon him.”

Deep sighs burst from the generous breast of Henry, as he gazed with love, pity and admiration at the meekness of the charming sufferer.—He informed her that Mr. Hammond was acquainted with Clement's base conduct, that he expressed no surprise, but entreated her to employ his friendship. Elinor
desired

desired he would return every respectful acknowledgement, and after some further conversation, they took an affectionate and mournful farewell,—Elinor promising he should hear from her in a few days.

It was determined between Elinor and Jenet, to hire apartments in the house of their mantua-maker, until they could obtain situations as governesses, for which their excellent education perfectly accomplished them.

As they wished to leave the house unobserved, Elinor inquired for Mr. Montague, and being told, he had not been at home during the night, was preparing to depart, when a servant entering, said a gentleman desired to see her; she descended to the parlour and beheld Mr. Thomas Danby, the nephew of Mr. Hammond.—Nature had formed this young man a complete coxcomb, —and a large command of money, had assisted in making him as perfect libertine;—
his

his intellects were poor, his disposition mean and resentful, and he pursued profligate pleasures, rather in imitation of abandoned superiors, than to gratify his own inclination.— From the first moment he beheld the amiable Elinor, an improper passion was kindled in his breast, and hearing from his uncle of her husband's desertion, his soul a stranger to every generous sentiment, took the moment of anguish, to insult her wounded heart with a base proposal.

Supposing him come with some benevolent message from his uncle, Elinor received him with her usual politeness, and requested he would be seated; when observing his colour heighten,—his voice falter,—and his whole appearance discover evident agitation, she conceived it proceeded from an unwillingness to enter on a topic so delicate as her situation, and in a voice of the utmost sweetness, she said, “ if, sir, your present embarrassment, arises from a fear of distressing me, I beg you will be composed,—for I partly
con-

conjecture your business.”—“ Oh ! that you did,” cried he, recovering assurance,—“ oh, that these eyes could disclose my adoring heart,—a heart that exults in Montague’s desertion, as it allows me to offer the lovely Elinor, my purse for her support,—and my arms for her protection ; oh, thou world of sweets ! continued the fop, falling on his knees before her, thou heaven of charms ! thou treasury of beauty ! how blind was Clement to forsake such loveliness,—but devil like he left a heaven,—to reign with imps, more dark than Erebus profound, compared with thee,—but only bless my bosom, where none but modest beauty ever lay,—and thou shalt live my first adored Sultana, oh thou transcending charmer,—listen to my suit, raise thy lowly slave, and smile upon my wishes,—by the heavens she yields ! the softest smiles now dimple round her mouth, and only wants the love inspiring voice to breathe my bliss.”—He might verily say she smiled, tho’ it would have been difficult, even for herself to determine what passion it

ex-

expressed, for shocked as she was at his confidence she was yet more wonder-struck at his ridiculous bombast, and certainly felt a strong inclination to indulge a violent laugh; but the anguish of her bosom, checking the propensity, it gradually sunk into a smile totally inexpressible; she felt neither anger, nor disdain, but rising with the same dimpling smile, which had so enraptured her lowly slave, calmly viewed him for a moment, and saying, "poor thing!" quitted the room, leaving the mortified little monkey, to his own humiliating reflections.

Removed from the insignificant being, that had rather diverted than hurt, her thoughts returned to their usual channel, and having related her adventure to the sympathizing Jennet exclaimed, "alas my friend, the humiliations of Elinor are beginning, young unprotected, with no arm to defend, no Clement to shield me from indignity,—insult will oppress me from every quarter,—oh, for a shelter to conceal my weary head! but whither can I go to live unknown? my
shame

shame will haunt me like a guilty spirit, the ungentle heart will spurn me, and even the good will *fear*, misconduct forced a husband to forsake a wife, a wedded wife,—and devote her to infamy and ruin. Jennet,” continued she, after a moment’s pause, “ I can change my name,—oh God, sustain my breaking heart ! what name ! *Douglas*, Clement has dishonored, Montague I dare not, cannot, will not claim. Oh Clement, Clement ! how hast thou reduced me ! yet surely, Jennet, if he knew, he would correct that groveling reptile.” “ *He correct !*” interrupted she, “ base detested wretch ; who first exposed you, who first betrayed your innocence to insult, and gave your virtuous name to deep reproach ! it was him, cruel ingrateful traitor, and oh forgive me if I wrong him, but perhaps he sent the creature, to answer hidden, darkened purposes, he must tremble at the thought of *Douglas*, and would exult, if he could impute to you transgression.”

The gentle soul of Elinor shuddered at the
idea,

idea, while she replied, "oh my Jennet! think not so, his heart misled by passion, is yet unpractised in the ways of guilt, and cannot be so black."

"Let not our moments be wasted speaking of him," said Jennet, "let us hasten, his return may impede our departure;" so saying, she ordered the baggage to be placed in a hackney coach, and taking the infant Anna in her arms, led her almost fainting friend to another in waiting, and in unbroken silence, arrived at Mrs. Clare's, in New Bond Street.

CHAP. XII.

NEW ARRANGEMENTS.

ELINOR and Jennet, were received by Mrs. Clare with uncommon respect, their circumstances considered, for these people generally proportion their civility, to the expectation of advantage.

As these ladies were reduced to the painful necessity, of reposing a confidence in their landlady, they deemed it most prudent, and conducive to their safety and convenience, to have no reserve, but frankly disclose their condition and future intentions. She was then

then requested, to procure them proper situations, and to carefully conceal their being at her house, from every person whatever.

Elinor immediately wrote to Sir Lionel, and in as easy a style as she could assume, informed him that from a disagreement with her husband she had quitted his home for a short time, but was very respectably situated with her beloved Jennet and little infant.—Entreated that he would be neither anxious, unhappy, nor offended, that when they met he should be umpire; and concluded with assuring him, she had every necessary comfort.—

Poor Elinor! her heart was bursting with varied emotions while she wrote, and hardly would her trembling hand trace the words, which conveyed the generous deceit.

Jennet dreading fatal consequences, was willing as Elinor, to conceal the cruel truth from the noble Douglas, and confirmed every

thing she had related ; a letter was then privately dispatched to Henry, assuring him, they were far from miserable, and that he should see them soon.

Mrs. Clare, being a mantua-maker of high fashion, had very extensive business, and finding that Jennet had an elegant taste in fancy trimmings, gave her ample employment, and liberal reward for finishing her court dresses.—

The amiable girl was delighted with her task, as it contributed to the support of her beloved friend, for when they left Mr. Montague's, one ten pound note was their sole treasure. Elinor having returned him all the little elegant trinkets, he had given in the hours of fondness, in a sealed packet ; their stock was nearly exhausted when Jennet entered on her business.

One day that Elinor was sadly musing over her sleeping infant, and Jennet disposing the
flowers

flowers for a masquerade dress, Mrs. Clare broke in upon them, saying, she could now provide for Mrs. Spence, (the name Elinor had assumed) for that Miss Dawson, a great city heiress, had applied to her for an attendant, or rather companion, who must be well-bred, as her last disgusted her with rudeness and vulgarity, and had been dismissed on that account.—

Elinor gratefully thanked her landlady, adding the situation would be poor indeed, that met rejection in her circumstances.

Miss Dawson's father had been a capital oil-man, and having only one son, and this young lady, was contented to retire from Cornhill smock, with his plum, to the purer air of Clapham-common.—Old and avaricious, he deemed a rich man the perfection of human nature ; yet he was lavish to his children, who being from a very early age, left to their own direction ; the son tho' extremely deformed, was a perfect petit

maitre ; and the daughter an uninformed coquette, with a tolerable face, and not ungraceful figure.

Elinor attired herself with simple neatness, and without one complaining word, at the hour Mrs. Clare had appointed, set out to wait upon the young lady.—Poor Jennet admiring her meekness, burst into tears, while her heart execrated the betrayer, who had reduced the daughter of her benefactress, adorned with all the virtues of humanity, to seek support in servitude.—

When Elinor arrived at Mr. Dawson's, she was conducted to the lady's dressing room, who was seated in elegant dishabille on a sofa by her brother, who appeared the most disagreeable being she had ever beheld: upon her entrance Miss Dawson arose, but the name of Clare being mentioned, the seat was instantly resumed, and in a voice of hauteur she demanded, what person

person of fashion she had last served?—

“ I have never been in service Madam,” replied Elinor, a little shocked.

“ Oh, I suppose you are one of our poor gentry; well do not fear,” observing her colour heighten, “ I have no objection, ’tis pleasant enough being attended by a gentlewoman, but I trust you will always preserve a proper distance, and not presume on fancied gentility.”—

“ You may believe, Madam,” replied our heroine, with rather an equivocal look, “ that I shall be ever sensible of the immense distance, and difference between Miss Dawson and myself.”

A nice perception had comprehended Elinor’s equivocal, but Miss Dawson’s understanding being far from brilliant, she received it as a compliment, and felt so pleased with the

imagined deference, that she soon settled with her new attendant; terms were no object with Elinor, a refuge where she was unknown, being her chief aim, she readily agreed to every thing proposed, and promising to attend in two days, respectfully took her leave.—

Tho' her sensible mind was both humbled and unhappy; on her return home she assumed an air of ease, and unwilling to add to the evident distress of Jennet, who forgetful of her own change of situation, only regretted the sorrows of her friend, she declared herself perfectly satisfied with Miss Dawson's reception.

In the afternoon they walked to Chelsea, and agreed with a very clean decent woman, to take care of her little smiling Anna; as she had been recommended as a wet nurse in happier days, Elinor felt perfectly easy, in leaving the infant under her protection, particularly as Jennet was to visit her at least three times

times a week. Some maternal tears dropt on delivering the infant to her nurse, but soon wiping them away, she prepared for entering on her new condition; painful indeed was their separation! it was the first they had ever known, which rendered it the more severe; and when they reflected on the occasion, and sad attending circumstances, every attempt at composure proved ineffectual; and while tears of bitterness fell in torrents from their eyes, they tore themselves from the arms of each other.

CHAP. XIII.

MISS DAWSON.

MISS Dawson welcomed her new attendant with a haughty civility, and while delivering the keys of her wardrobe, informed her she was engaged that evening to a dance, generally sat up very late, and should always expect her attendance, at what ever hour she retired.

Elinor bowing compliance, for her heart was too full for utterance, withdrew to her lady's apartments, where, lost in the sad variety

variety of her own reflections, she remained until, four o'clock brought her mistress home in high spirits.

She had been delighted with the preference of a young East-Indian, and was in harmony with all around her; and it was only in these capricious starts of temper, that even the mild unassuming Elinor could endure her arrogance.

Her disposition displayed an uncommon contrariety, being both peevish and petulant, and in those she thought her *ill looking days*, became perfectly insupportable.—

Fortunately for poor Elinor, the handsome East-Indian declared himself her lover, and when she was not engaged with him in public, all her hours were devoted, to invent the most captivating dresses; and having a high opinion of her maid's taste, often condescended to consult her, on the most alluring wave of a feather, and the most becom-

ing form of gauze, for a delicate display of the bosom.—

The mind of Elinor being thus constantly employed, was prevented dwelling on her own sorrows, and she was yielding to a meek resignation, when an unexpected insult awaked her, to all the horrors of her humiliated condition.

She was seated in a pensive humour embroidering a waistcoat, which her lady intended presenting to her admirer, when the dressing room door opened, and Mr. John Dawson made his appearance. If the reader will vouchsafe to recollect, the figure of *Le diable boiteux*, a faint idea may be formed of this young cit's person; who by affecting the graces, or rather the follies of fashion, rendered himself so perfectly ridiculous, that the whole creation could not produce his equal; and though Elinor could have pitied his ugliness and deformity, she was prevented, by his absurdities exciting her contempt.

Upon

Upon his entrance she was retiring, but he caught her hand saying,—

“How I have longed child, to find that devilish mistress of yours absent.”—

Your sister, is extremely obliged by your polite epithet, replied she coolly withdrawing her hand, and since you have longed so violently to occupy the room, I leave you in possession.”

“Do not be silly,” resumed he, holding her “nor be blind to your own interest, I know you are poor, or would not be the slave of my splenetic sister,—now I am very rich, and will keep you well, for I am most consummately in love with you.”

“Love me!” repeated she, staring at him, “love me!”—

“Yes,” cried he, “love you,—is there any thing wonderful in a young man loving a pretty girl?”

“ A man !” reiterated she, opening her eyes wider on his delectable figure, “ a man ! ’tis well you specify your rank in nature, for I should have mistaken you for any other being, even a caliban sooner, than of the human race.”

“ You then reject my offers,” interrupted he, while malignant passion glared in his little eyes, “ reject them !” returned she affecting calmness, “ when you can discover any thing on earth, or under the earth resembling yourself make that demand ; but pray you frighten me no more.”

Unable longer to restrain his fury, with all the rancour imputed to deformity, he seized her arm, and in a voice almost choaked, exclaimed, “ triumph in your wit, you proud pretender, innocent Mrs. Spence.---Pure Miss Douglas,---virtuous Mrs. Montague, I know your arts, but this roof shall no longer shelter your disgraces.”

What

What were the feelings of the poor unhappy Elinor, at hearing her misfortunes were betrayed! the pride of resentment, the dignity of insulted honour, all forsook her, and yielding to her inward agony, with a short hysteric laugh, she fell lifeless at the feet of the distorted monster;—no spark of pity ever warmed his breast, for with savage rudeness, he kissed her pale lips, and cold bosom, during her insensibility, and on the appearance of returning reason, left her with the most cruel menaces of revenge.

Leaning her beating head on a chair, while tears of anguish streamed from her lovely eyes, she faintly cried, “ Oh Clement! Clement! to what hast thou betrayed me? Poor, lost, insulted, ruined wretch, whither shall I hide me! only in the grave, where all things are forgotten, there shall my wrongs, my sorrows, and myself repose in peace: am I the child of Douglas? No, I am the degraded—oh detested thought! spurned from the heart, that vowed to guard and love me
ever.

ever.—What then am I?—nothing—only an unhappy,—Oh my brother!” Feeling her ideas wander, and her senses again receding, she feebly rose from her lowly posture, and ringing the bell, a servant soon brought some reviving drops, and in a little time, she became more composed, when she resolved immediately to leave Miss Dawson, and encounter want in every dreadful form, rather than be subjected and exposed to the licentious passion, and black revenge of a man, who had by some means informed himself of her condition.

Miss Dawson having been only on a card party, in the village returned at an early hour, and throwing herself in a chair, without observing the extreme langour of Elinor, demanded, in a familiar tone, if she had ever been in love? amazed at the question, and unknowing what to answer, she remained silent,—it was repeated.

“ Was you ever in love, Spence ?”

“ In

“ In love, Madam,” stammered she, “ I—I indeed I—I know nothing about it.”

“ I have heard, resumed her mistress, (without observing her confusion,) that when a woman declares she knows nothing about it, that it is a sure indication she knows a great deal. Now I wish to learn some of its surest signs, being of opinion that I am most violently in love myself, with my enchanting fellow.” “ Oh Spence ! had you heard him, seen him to night, and then his fortune joined to mine. Oh, I shall be rich as Croesus, happy as an Empress.---You shall serve me still, are really good natured, and I will increase your wages.”

Elinor being now sensible, that she at least was ignorant of her condition, to spare her poor heart, future confusion from a discovery, related her brother's behaviour, and added, her determination was to quit the house.

“ I

“ I am poor, humbled, and unknown,” said she, “ yet honour is still my pride, and hereafter, Madam, should circumstances be told to my disadvantage, vouchsafe to believe that my principles are pure, tho’ I have been unfortunate.”---

“ Why, I must allow,” interrupted Miss Dawson, “ that my brother is no very prepossessing object, but he is rich, and these young men of fashion, think gold irresistible, and that servants should not be nice; however, you must stay till I can find another, and in the mean time, pray undress me, and don’t stand musing there.”

Elinor felt too much disdain to make any reply, and the pride of her mistress being offended, at receiving a servant’s warning, they parted in mutual displeasure.

Our heroine retired to bed, but not to rest, the occurrences of the evening had agitated a spirit oppressed before by various
distresses

distresses. Being closely confined, she had only seen her infant once during her month's servitude, she had received no letters from her brother; and for upwards of a week had not even heard from Jenet.

[Thus tost from thought to thought, sleep became a stranger to her pillow; languid and unrefreshed, she arose early and was crossing the gallery to Miss Dawson's dressing room, when to her astonished sight appeared Mr. Thomas Danby, leaning on the arm of her deformed insulter: passing them in silent disdain, she entered the apartment and bolted the door, as a security from their intrusion. The mystery of her exposure was now unveiled.

A similarity of follies and vices attached these young men, and they became inseparable. On Elinor's first arrival at Mr. Dawson's, she had been seen by Mr. Danby, who on becoming the confidant of his friend's passion disclosed all; indeed a great deal

deal more, than he knew of our persecuted heroine ; and while his vanity concealed the scornful rejection his offers had received, his malice declared her the forsaken mistress of Clement Montague, a girl who would willingly bestow her favours on a liberal keeper.

Mr. John Dawson carefully concealed this information from his sister, in order to turn it to his own advantage : but stung to the soul at her contemptuous treatment of his proposal, he had summoned his privy counsellor, to support his impeachment, which he resolved to prefer when the family assembled, as much from a desire to gratify mean revenge as a hope that her destitute condition would oblige her to yield to his wishes.

But his purposes were defeated, for no sooner did Elinor behold him with Mr. Danby, then she determined neither menace nor persuasion, should detain her another night in the family.

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Miss Dawson, expecting her lover to breakfast, dressed in much haste, so that she had no opportunity to impart her intentions, which notwithstanding she firmly resolved to do before dinner.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

DISMISSION.

ELINOR was arranging the toilette, when a footman desired her to carry down Miss Dawson's frame : apprehensive of encountering Mr. Danby, she obeyed with infinite reluctance, but knowing that an evil deferr'd, becomes still more formidable, with a palpitating heart, she took the frame and descended.

On entering the parlour, where Miss Dawson and her lover were seated, fearing to behold her enemies, she kept her eyes fixed on
the

the ground: on raising them, her colour vanished, the blood turned cold within her veins, and the tambour dropt from her trembling hand, feeling her spirits fail, she staggered to a chair, and supported herself by the back.

“What air hath seized the wench now?” cried Miss Dawson. “My Abigail, (turning to her lover,) is wondrously troubled with sensibility;” while she was speaking, her admirer starting from his seat, flew to the fainting Elinor, and supported her in his arms.

Miss Dawson gazed in astonishment, but what must have been the sensations of the hapless Elinor, when in the lover of her mistress, she beheld the faithless Clement Montague.

Miss Dawson a little recovered from her surprise, demanded if he had any knowledge of Spence,—her maid.

“ I

“ I-- I, indeed I cannot say, that I have any remembrance of the name,” replied he, in deep confusion, while the blush of shame, kept mantling o’er his face.

“ Indeed,” resumed she, with something of disdain in her manner, “ then you are very charitable : but ’tis a pity you should misapply it, for that creature I have learnt this morning, is a meer adventress, who assumes a name at pleasure, as may best suit her purpose. But she shall no longer harbour infamy here, added she, violently ringing the bell, “ no longer shock my sight.”

Elinor a little revived, feebly withdrew from the arms of her husband, and thanking him for his humanity, with an unrepublishing look retired.

“ I wonder,” said Miss Dawson, viewing Clement significantly, “ what the creature’s real name may be, she is far gone in romance,

as

as well as infamy, for my brother, (who I confess, is not admirably formed for la belle passion), made her an offer which she rejected, and provoked him, by sarcasm on his figure, to expose her character, I must discover her name." She ceased, while all the generous passions of Montague stirred within him.

Remorse for the sorrows, insults and calumnies, in which he had involved the innocent Elinor, wrung his bosom, and whirled his brain to madness; the meek, uncomplaining sweetness of her looks revived all his former love; and he resolved to desist in his pursuits, and restore her to deserved wealth, honour and happiness; he replied with firmness, while rectitude of intention gave dignity to his manner.

" Her name, Madam, she bears a name which Britain venerates, that never knew a blemish,—pure as her virtuous mind, fair as her lovely form, which never knew a stain
till

till Montague, resigned it to reproach."—

She was meditating some haughty answer, when her father entered.

A wild impatience sat upon his heavy brow? anxiety seemed to have moulded every feature, and his whole frame trembled with agitation.

His daughter perfectly engaged with her own contemplations, did not observe the unusual distress of her father, until he turned to her lately favoured lover, and in a voice of scornful insolence, demanded, what business he had with his Polly now his fortune was lost.—Miss Dawson with a malignant calmness, which she intended to appear like dignity, replied, if so, she really pitied the young man's sad condition. But what were the sensations of the contrite Montague; a thousand wild ideas rushed thro' his brain, while astonishment doubt and fear, by turns assailed his bosom, yet willing if possible to conceal his feelings,

feelings, with assumed composure, he requested to be indulged with an explanation. — This indulgence Mr. Dawson was perfectly prepared and equally impatient to grant, being well informed of every circumstance before his very abrupt entrance to his daughter's dressing room. —

At a very early period in life, chance had introduced him to the acquaintance of Mr. Hammond, and tho' a dissimilarity of principals precluded every kind of intimacy, Mr. Dawson knew that very few in the commercial world, had attained such a portion of wealth with the honour, probity and liberality Mr. Hammond had done.

Confined and selfish as were his own ideas, he yet knew to venerate and confide in those virtues, his own narrow mind, would in no way suffer him to imitate, and knowing him to be the guardian of young Montague, before he finally concluded the treaty of marriage, between him and his daughter, prudence led him to the mansion of Mr. Ham-

mond, when with all the brevity of a trader, bargaining for a parcel of goods, he explained the nature of his visit, adding, as he had so vast a property to bestow on his dear Polly, no one could wonder at his being so particular in his inquiries and anxiety, to secure it beyond the power of accident or extravagance.

Most patiently did the worthy Mr. Hammond, listen to the monied citizen; for consternation at the cruel perfidy of Clement to the amiable injured Elinor, and anguish that the darling son of his long loved, ever regretted friend, should by his base conduct dishonour the sacred memory of such a father; rendered him for a time speechless and immoveable, and when he recovered power to articulate; in accents not very flattering to the self consequence of Mr. Dawson, he exclaimed, marry your daughter!—Clement Montague marry your daughter!—you dream—you cannot be so mad,—nor he.—

Here

Here the worthy man ceased, he could not give the virtuous name of the wronged, unhappy Elinor to undeserved reproach, to be the scorn of that unfeeling pride and oppressive wealth, which never felt the mild influence of generous commiseration.—His generous heart was bleeding for the innocent sufferer, whom his fancy pictured, wandering helpless and unprotected, mourning the loss of that heart that had betrayed her to grief and misery, he therefore determined, if possible, to prevent the intended marriage, yet remain perfectly silent respecting Clement's union with the daughter of Lady Douglas.

Collecting therefore his scattered ideas with affected composure, he demanded if indeed such a treaty was in agitation.—Full of imagined importance, and swelling with the low pride of wealth, Mr. Dawson demanded in turn, if he thought Clement Montague too good for Miss Mary Dawson, with fifty thousand pounds.

Far different are my thoughts my old acquaintance, interrupted Mr. Hammond, speaking in the very spirit of truth, far different indeed, continued he, your daughter I hope deserves a better fate, and will not cover your age, with the sorrow and disappointment such an union would ensure, tho' the son of a beloved friend, I must acknowledge, with pain acknowledge, he is unworthy the attachment of a virtuous woman.

The features of Mr. Dawson now assumed a milder form, his eyes brightened with the compliments paid to his daughter, and not being much troubled with those delicate feelings, that would shudder at the idea of uniting a child to unprincipled independance, he took the hand of Mr. Hammond, saying with a smile.—A ha my friend, I understand you, Montague is a wild dog, pleases the ladies eh,—never mind,—Poll is a rare fine wench,—tame him,—tame him, never fear,—both are rich, and if they should happen

pen to run counter,—why you know they can.——

Can interrupted Hammond, chagrined at his perseverance, pursue separate pleasures you would say,—but mistake me no longer, nor be yourself deluded, as a friend I inform you, that by the last advices from India, I learn that the fortune of the two young Montagues are lost, their father some time before his death, drew all his money but for what reason, or where he afterwards bestowed it, is buried in the deepest obscurity, an obscurity I fear impenetrable,—This premised, you are at liberty to act as your judgment and prudence may direct.

Prudence, meer worldly prudence, was the first of virtues in the estimation of the money-loving Mr. Dawson, the virtue he early studied, long practised, and resolved ever to cherish.

On the unexpected intelligence, this long

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nourished

nourished guest took full possession of his every faculty, and wrought so total a revolution in his sentiments and determinations, that hastily thanking Mr. Hammond for his kindly warning, with an abrupt adieu, he hastened to Clapham, leaving his benevolent informer perfectly satisfied, in having saved a young woman, perhaps not undeserving, from an unprincipled libertine's designs, and prevented the shaft of anguish from sinking still deeper, in the gentle bosom of the ill fated Elinor.

When Mr. Dawson reached Clapham, it may be remembered he abruptly entered the apartment of his daughter, when beholding her seated by the ruined youth, tho' he had predetermined to behave with calmness, all resolution forsook him, and to Clement's request of an explanation, he replied with anger and impatience, " I am sorry, Mr. Montague to tell you bad tidings, but in a conference I had with Mr. Hammond this morning,

morning, I have learnt that your fortune is lost: your late father drew all his money before his death, and it is unknown how, or where he disposed of it.—

This being the case, I interdict your union with my daughter unless you have other funds, that can enable you to make settlements, adequate to a fortune of fifty thousand pounds; as for my dear Polly here, I am sure she is too good to break my heart, by marrying a beggar.”—

“ Oh dismiss your fears,” interrupted the young Lady, struggling with the most unamiable passions, “ I shall behave perfectly prudent on the *trying* occasion;” then turning with a cool courtesey to her late lover, left the room.

Her bosom had never known the gentle warmth of generous love; Clement Montague was the first elegant fellow that had

addressed her, and her father knowing from transactions with Mr. Hammond, that he would possess an independent fortune, sanctioned his pretensions; but no sooner was that hope vanished, than it produced the consequences described.

“ If you will take my advice, young man,” said Mr. Dawson to Clement, as he quitted the room, “ you will forget all your fine gentlemanly airs, and apply soberly as a clerk; perhaps old Hammond may receive you; good morning, I don’t expect your walks to be often through Clapham.”

It was now that the penitent Montague, experienced the horrors of unavailing remorse: at the very moment returning honour dawned upon his soul, heaven, in the punishment for past transgression, deprived him of the means to evince the sincerity of his repentance; and the purity of his regard for the wronged Elinor. The woman he could
never

never cease to esteem, and whom unknown to himself he had never ceased to love.

When she left his home, he was tortured; all inquiries proved fruitless, and mistaking the anguish of disappointment, for the fury of resentment, to drown remembrance of imagined wrongs, he plunged into a sea of dissipation, when chance introduced him to Miss Dawson; she was agreeable, and pleased with his flattery, while his vanity was gratified in her supposed attachment.

Still painful thoughts would obtrude, still the mild form of Elinor would appear, and conscience whisper, she is thy wife. But pride was his failing; she had never deigned to ask, but left him, proudly left him; and to silence every voice at once, he was hastening his marriage with Miss Dawson, with all his usual precipitancy, when that eventful morning dissolved the treaty for ever.

He had only seen his brother once, who

repeating the soft farewell Elinor had left for him, so affected his heart, that could he have discovered her retreat, he had done her every justice; disdaining to confess a conviction of his errors to Henry, he simply demanded where she was: his brother's asseverations of ignorance, in that point were totally discredited, and when he related her motives for concealment, pride and rage so transported him, that giving Henry a violent blow, they parted and never after met.

To the accumulated anguish of Clement Montague, was now added the terrors of approaching poverty, or at the very best a humiliating precarious dependance, upon those he had once treated with proud dignity.—

Deeply immersed in the painful review of these sad circumstances, he scarcely observed the insulting congée of his intended father-in-law, but remained as if transfixed to the seat where he left him.

When

When poor Elinor retreated from the scene of confusion, soon as her spirits were a little composed, she prepared to quit a mansion in which she had only received humiliation, sorrow and insult. Her business was interrupted, by the entrance of the house-keeper exclaiming.

“The lord have mercy on us all now ! for the devil himself would not bide among us ; yonder has Miss’s lover lost his fortune, ruined and undone, off she has flounced for all her love, and the old curmudgeon our master, is sending him a packing.”

“Ruined, undone !” repeated Elinor, with a look of the wildest sorrow, “how,—when,—where ? Oh my God ! say where is he ?”

“Oh lord help the poor soul I pities him, replied the woman, “it would pity any body at the heart, to see him sit gnawing his fingers, as if he had not eat a meal of meat this month.”

“ Cease, cease,” interrupted Elinor with increasing agony, “ only say where he is, for spite of ruin, wrongs and shame, I feel I am the wife, and this my hour to carry peace to his forlorn, deserted bosom.” So saying swift as thought, she flew to the parlour, leaving the loquacious housekeeper in a state of wonder at her exclamation.—

On opening the door she beheld her husband, pressing his head on the corner of the sofa: at her approach he started, and in a soft tremulous voice exclaimed, “ Elinor!”

“ My Clement!” returned she, in the most pitying accents, “ shrink not from me,” seeing him retreat, “ were you great and happy I would ne’er remind you that I lived, but in these moments of humiliation and distress, I pray to be restored unto your arms;” and continued she, meekly sinking on her knees, “ altho’ the blood of Douglas, never knew to beg, I now beseech you to receive me;
take

take me to your bosom, I will be the soother of your cares, will labour to support you, —beg—want—die,—but never leave you nor forsake you.”

“ Sweet injured excellence !” cried Clement, taking her cold hand, and raising her to his beating breast, “ How much more welcome would your brother’s dagger be, than thy mild words,—my own, my first, my last, my only love !—Yet, yet believe me not, I am,—must be the villain, so deep in guilt am I, it every way pursues me, no alternative, “ No,” cried he, pressing her still closer, “ no, lost, lost, Elinor !”

What a moment for our heroine ! wrongs, pride, resentment, all were forgotten, every softer passion triumphed in her delicate bosom, a beautiful confusion flushed her mild features, and sinking in his arms, she returned his kind pressure, whispering in the sweetest voice,

“ No,

“ No, I am found, will be ever yours,” every past sorrow, every future fear, and every anguished thought were lost in the soft luxury of reconciliation.

They were the whole world to each other : when a reflective ray bursting on the mind of Clement, he started from the encircling arms of his wife, and exclaimed in a voice of distraction ;

“ Were I but what I thought myself a few short hours ago, you should indeed ! but I am gone, I yield me to my fate, and never more will wrong thee. No, fare thee well ! when guilt, remorse, and sorrow lay me in the grave, may Elinor be blest and flourish !” She would have held him, feebly struggled to retain him, but he broke the weak restraint, kissed her, blest her, and retreated. She looked beseechingly, raised her hands, but could not speak, again he pressed her to his bosom, his tears bedewed her cold face,

con-

conflicting passions shook his frame, and unable longer to sustain the varied agony, he threw her from his arms, and with every appearance of distraction, and rushed impetuously from the room.

For some minutes Elinor remained immovable, predicting the most dreadful consequences from the violence of her husband's passions, and at length was yielding to a frenzy little inferior to his own, when the housekeeper very seasonably appeared, and gave her thoughts a different turn.

"Marry," said she, "but mischief is busy with us, how have you offended Miss? She has sent her orders for you to go."

"I am ready, going this instant," said Elinor, "I want no wages," continued she, declining the money, "no I want it not, a remembrance of cruel insult is all I shall carry with me, farewell!" added she, proceeding to

to the door, where she left the housekeeper, more astonished than ever at her conduct: for the refusal of money was a folly seldom practised, by any within the walls of Mr. Dawson's house.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

THE SURPRISE.

ELINOR had left every devoir she considered due to Miss Dawson, with the housekeeper; and had already reached the Hall, when a violent knocking at the gate made her start, and involuntarily grasp the handle of a parlour door: on raising her eyes to see who had entered she beheld Sir Lionel Douglas.

“ My

“My brother!” exclaimed she with a thousand mixed emotions, and was throwing her arms around him when he coldly repulsed the embrace, saying, as he led her into the parlour, “Your brother.”

The servants gazed at the dignity of so martial a figure, and respectfully bowing retired.

Elinor tho’ shocked, and trembling at the penetrating severity of her brother’s looks, again attempted to take his hand: but retreating quick, he cried in the most commanding voice, “Elinor, approach me not;—Douglas can hold no commerce with dishonour,—but if thou wouldst again be dear unto my heart, justify thy darkened conduct; and say what caprice moved thee to forsake the mansion of a husband; the fond protection of my chosen friend; who loved thee with such matchless tenderness.—Thou answerest not—well may’st thou tremble, lost, degenerate girl!—Where
is

is the spirit of thy ancestors;—alas 'tis lost in thee!—Oh that an early grave had been thy fate!—I then had washed thy precious dust with tears, and gloried o'er the tomb of Elinor; but now thy conduct stains a brother's cheek with shame.—Wilt thou not speak! Speak Elinor, before we part for ever.”—continued he in the attitude of leaving her.

“Yes,” replied the poor sufferer, sinking at his feet, “yes, my heart oppressed with deep calamity, was breaking ere you came.—When you appeared I hoped to lay me in your kindly arms and die in peace:—but you spurn me—I thank you,—you help me on a weary journey;—when I am gone you will learn to pity me.”—

“Drive me not to desperation with this soft complaining,” interrupted he, raising her in agony, “relieve my tortured soul.—Where is your husband,—why did you leave him?”
“We disagreed,—the fault was mine,—inquire

quire no more;—yet I am innocent,—no guilt ere stained your sister's honour."

"Oh Elinor," said he, pressing her in his arms, "could I think your Clement wronged you;—that he valued not the treasure I bestowed upon him,—how swift a brother's vengeance should pursue him!—The sword of Douglas should not rest if Elinor was injured,"

"Ah!" replied she in anguish, "what would you? Is he not my husband, the father of my child; the worship'd of my heart; and I more dear to him than worlds of wealth, than lengthened years of happiness."

"Eternal providence! whither am I whirled?" exclaimed her brother; "Why then do I behold thee—bitter thought! degraded to a menial slave, without a name? Where is thy husband,—when didst thou see him? By Heaven from him I will extort the truth at the expence of life."

"Even

“ Even this hour I saw him,” returned she, “ ruined and undone I saw him, but where he is I fear I ne’er shall know:—perhaps he lives,—perhaps he does not;—yet inquire no more,—all will be soon explained.”

Innumerable doubts, fears, jealousies, and agonies unutterable distracted the noble breast of Douglas. That a horrid secret was deeply concealed from him he could not doubt, and resolving to search it out from others, ceased interrogating his sister, who appeared in no condition to answer him, even had she been willing.

After a few minutes pause, he then with a cold reserve, yet blended with pitying tenderness, demanded whether she preferred his protection or Miss Dawson’s? “ Oh yours,” replied she eagerly, “ I was returning to Jennet, when you came.”—“ lean on me then,” said he, “ poor Elinor, you seem to need support.”

In passing thro' the hall, they encountered Mr John Dawson.

"What Miss," cried he spitefully, "going with another spark?" most likely the diminutive sprite had not viewed her majestic protector, for when Sir Lionel, looking down with petrifying disdain, inquired if he had any business with Mrs. Montague, the poor trembling cripple, seemed to shrink beneath conscious inferiority, and replied.

"None at all, sir."—If you should, continued the baronet, as her husband is absent, in being her brother she claims my protection, and I suppose Sir Lionel Douglas, may venture to answer any of your demands."

"Indeed, sir," replied he bowing, and pale with terror, "I have none."

"You have not!" cried Sir Lionel, *assuming*

ing a menacing air, "Then permit me to ask what prompted you to such insolence?"

"I---I---I beg ten thousand p--p--p-ar-dons, fir,—but indeed up--on my honour."

"Honour!" exclaimed the baronet, taking the piece of shaking deformity by the neck, and holding him out a spectacle to the surrounding servants, who unable to restrain their risibility at the grotesque figure, made the hall resound with laughter.—

"Honour! thou pitiful blight of creation, back to thy pickle pots; and when thou hast learnt that cowards have nothing to do with honour, thank nature for having given thee, *marks* so striking as spared thee *one* from my hand, which thou wouldst have felt more severely."

The roaring of the terrified delinquent, and the laughing of the servants brought Mr. Dawson, from an opposite apartment, followed by Miss.

“ Oh my son John,” cried the old man.—

“ Oh poor Jacky, indeed !” echoed the daughter,—who on beholding so elegant a figure, as now supported her late attendant began apologizing, but was repulsed by Sir Lionel, saying with a distant bow,—
“ My sister Madam is engaged, which prevents her listening to apologies as unnecessary, as unwished. Mrs. Montague,” turning to his sister, “ I wait your leisure.”

She then gave him her hand, when they both stepped into the coach, which had brought him, and left the family of Dawson to comment on the occurrences of the morning.

They were no sooner seated in the coach, than Sir Lionel requested his sister would allow him, to conduct her to any other lodging than Mrs. Clare's, “ For I know not how it is,” continued he, “ but my heart refuses her its suffrage, and I feel displeased
and

and unhappy, that my Jennet should attach herself to any of her friends." He then demanded what lady it was, with whom she was on a visit.—

Elinor assured him, she did not know, but consenting to lodge where her infant was nursed, the coach was ordered to Chelsea.

The apartments were fortunately vacant, and in them Sir Lionel left his sister embracing her little darling, and set out to seek, Mr. Montague and his brother; and also to be informed of his beloved Jennet's abode, whom he wished to be with Elinor, her declining health and weakened spirits, demanding the attention of a tender friend.

Before we proceed it will be necessary, to account for the unexpected appearance of Sir Lionel Douglas. From the moment he received his sister's letters, informing him, she

had quitted the protection of her husband, the most distracting fears, anxieties and conjectures agitated his bosom.—

He knew his sister virtuous and good, and believed his friend generous and tender; and having obtained leave of absence, determined to judge with the strictest impartiality between them.

That he might hear their mutual accusation, in presence of each other, without being biassed by the soft pleading of a female tongue, on his arrival in London he repaired to the apartments of Mr. Montague, to convince him he intended every justice; but he had left them for some time, and Sir Lionel hastened to Mrs. Clare's, where his sister and Jennet desired he would address his letters; there he was chagrined and disappointed, on hearing that Jennet was on a week's visit to a friend in the country: but on inquiring for his sister, what was his distress on
being

being told, she was fille de chambre to Miss Dawson, under the name of Spence ! Pride, anger, love, resentment, pity, all overwhelmed him, and in that conflicting state, he arrived at Clapham in the very moment, his suffering sister was leaving Mr. Dawson's house.

CHAP. XVI.

A DISCOVERY.

SIR Lionel Douglas having left Chelsea, proceeded with the firm determination to instantly develop the deep mystery, which seemed to involve the fate of his sister; but love and Jennet, claiming also a large portion of his thoughts, he turned into Bond-Street, in order to inform himself of her abode.

Having announced his name, he was instantly

stantly introduced to Mrs. Clare, to whom he coolly said, that having removed his sister from Clapham, and a matter of importance demanding the immediate attention of Miss Aprieu, he desired to know where she could be found?

“It is extremely particular as well as unfortunate,” replied Mrs. Clare, “that I am unable to gratify your wishes, Miss Jennet having quitted my friend, and accepted an invitation to the country; yet you may depend, sir, that my first intelligence respecting her shall be conveyed to you.”

“Heaven and earth! woman,” interrupted he, “whither have you sent her? By all the host above, if you do not instantly produce her, justice shall make you a trembling example of its vengeance.”—

“Pursue what measures you please,” replied the Mantua-maker apparently regardless

of the menace, " I have too many engagements, to watch the haunts of imprudent work-women.—Good day fir."

The brain of Douglas was on fire, while a thousand horrid fears for Jenner's safety, alarmed his bosom.—Reason tottered on her throne, and in a whirl of madness, unknowing how to turn, he descended to the street; Elinor,—Montague, all were forgotten, in the dread of Jenner's fate. Without having formed any plan, he was insensibly traversing the pavement, when a young girl gently touched his arm; supposing her one of those degraded females, who disgrace the streets, and invade the walks of unwary passengers, he was turning silently away, when again she touched him, and demanded if he wished to hear of Miss Aprieu?—

The name shot like lightning to his heart, and catching the girl's hand, he exclaimed.

" Yes,

"Yes, yes, tell me of her?"—

"You will scarce credit where she is," resumed the young woman, "for you think her good."

"Good," interrupted he, notwithstanding his impatience, "Oh she is goodness in its loveliest form."

"She is very bad indeed sir," continued the girl, "if not too good for her present residence, and I depend on your honour, concealing that I inform you, she went from our house, a week since, with Mrs. Bentley, who keeps a noted house of pleasure in the Strand."

"Eternal powers!" exclaimed the tortured Douglas, "what curses more! Oh young woman, pity me!—Say went she willingly?"

"I am sorry to distress you more," replied

she feelingly, “ but indeed Miss discovered no reluctance.”—

“ Oh Jennet, Jennet !” cried he, staggering against a door, “ Jennet, Jennet thou hast undone me ! but vengeance still is mine.”

“ You may yet preserve her,” added the girl, “ she has only been there a week !”

“ A week, a week,” repeated he, striking his head enfrenzied,—“ An age in infamy,—but I will seek her.”—

What intelligence for the noble Douglas ! He no longer doubted his sister’s indiscretions, and Jennet’s guilt,—separating from Montague, living with the abandoned Mrs. Clare, changing her name, her mysterious confusion,—and lastly, the insolent implication of the deformed Dawson, all contributed to confirm his belief of her baseness. His heart
bleeding

bleeding with her dishonour, might yet have found a soothing balm in Jennet's virtues, but alas ! she inflicted yet deeper torture.—The modest,—lovely,—highly favoured Jennet,—regardless of his vows, his truth and tenderness, forgetful of his mother's precepts, care and condescension, had willingly resigned herself to a brothel !

Dreadfully occupied with these ideas, he scarce observed the girl's departure, but starting wildly with smothered rage, hastened to the house of Mrs. Bentley. On the door being opened, he demanded if Miss Aprieu was at home ?

“ Yes,” replied the footman.—“ Your name, sir ?”

“ My name,” said he, grasping his sword, with some determined thought, “ my name ! conduct me to her.”

The fellow having received no orders, and not much liking the looks of Sir Lionel, opened the folding doors of a superb saloon; and discovered Jennet Aprieu brilliantly attired, and sparkling like an angel, seated on a sofa by a gentleman, who very familiarly played with her hand. For a moment, horror blighted the sight of Douglas, and rendered him mute, while his heart burned with the desire of vengeance.

A suffusion bright as the opening rose, covered the lovely face of Jennet, on his entrance, and with the sweetest smile, she was advancing to embrace him, when a glance of indignant pity made her retreat; she was too well acquainted with the soul of Douglas, not to perceive that his bosom, struggled with internal passion,—again she approached, when spurning her, with fury he exclaimed,

“What art thou? that would contaminate my honour, with thine empoisoned touch.”

She had sunk pale as death, upon her knees at a little distance, and folding her hands said feebly, "am I not your Jennet, Douglas?"

"My Jennet! poor dishonoured wretch. The gentleman had flown to support her which made the spirit of Douglas tremble within him, fury flashed in his eyes, and drawing his sword, he demanded of the gentleman, who he was? "The protector of this lady, hot brained ruffian," replied he haughtily.

"Defend her then," said Douglas, with a calmness more dreadful than his rage, "defend her then and triumph o'er the ruin you have made."

Jennet starting in agonized terror, from the supporting arm of the gentleman, threw her poor trembling frame upon the bosom of Douglas, saying faintly, "Stop rash Douglas! he is,—I am,"—nature could no more,—sense forsook her, and she sunk lifeless at his feet.

“ Poor pale ruin of my hopes !” cried he, gazing a moment on the beautiful insensible. “ It needs no tongue to tell me what thou art.” Then turning to the gentleman, in the attitude of attack, “ This moment fir is ours, and death or vengeance, all the good you have left me.

The stranger would have remonstrated, but Douglas advancing to his breast, crying “ villain ! defend thyself.”—

He drew,—they engaged, the combat was soon decided, for the gentleman receiving the sword of Douglas in his body, fell at the side of Jennet, who lay unconscious of the scene around her.—

The noise of the combatants soon assembled the family, consisting of an elderly woman, two young girls and several servants.

“ Bring a surgeon for my Lord, and seize the murderer,” shrieked the old beldame.—

“ I mean

“ I mean not to escape, Madam,” replied Douglas, with indignant scorn, “ The deed my sword hath done,—I dare to justify, and honour will approve.”

A surgeon soon arrived, who declaring Lord Derham’s wounds, both doubtful and dangerous, his Lordship in a feeble voice, desired the surgeon to take notice, and bear witness that whatever might be his fate, the gallant stranger was blameless and must be cleared. “ I must insist,” added his Lordship, that he be not detained, for much I fear he has the wrong.”—

Douglas had listened with a gloomy silence, but at the word wrong, he started yet a step from the cold form of Jenet.—“ Be not more deluded,” continued the nobleman, perceiving his emotion, “ that lovely girl, is pure as angel innocence, little suspecting the deceit of woman, she was betrayed to this mansion of guilt for the blackest purposes, while I, her intended destroyer,

stroyer, feigning acquaintance and friendship with you, claimed and won her confidence. Let this confession, sir, induce you to conceal a transaction, which would plunge a wife and family in sorrow. Conduct me home, my heart grows faint, should I survive, Sir Lionel, let me see you."

During the time Lord Derham spoke, Jennet had once opened her eyes, when seeing the pale looks of Douglas, who disconsolately leant his head on the wall, and the blood streaming on the floor, instantly relapsed into insensibility.

The wounded nobleman was soon carried away; when the old woman in an agony of terror beseeched Sir Lionel to be silent, and not to ruin her, as Miss Aprieu had received no injury, but, on the contrary had been treated with every respectful attention. Turning from her without deigning even to look, he raised his fainting Jennet, who in a few minutes recovered
suf-

sufficiently to press his supporting hand, and say "Douglas, indeed I never wronged you."

"No, my dear angel," replied the transported lover, "and more precious are the assurances of Jennet's purity to this fond bosom, than pardon to the guilty wretch, or songs of seraphims to dying saints; my virtuous love! my beauteous, suffering Jennet!" added he, folding the innocent trembler to his heart, at each endearing name.

"Come let us hasten from this scene of guilt and horror, leave it to those betraying demons, and bury sad remembrance in our future bliss."

With a menace to the superior, that she should soon hear of him, he then led the enfeebled Jennet from the mansion of destruction, engaged a coach and ordered it to Chelsea.

When seated the sweet face of Jennet assumed

assumed a death-like paleness, and Douglas with the softest care, gently laid her head upon his bosom. She looked him the fondest thanks, being too weak for utterance, nor changed her contented posture, until given to the arms of Elinor.

Douglas now began to hope his sister, would be fully justified, as the late suspected Jennet; and in that hope addressed her more tenderly than he had yet done.

Elinor being ignorant of the dangers to which Jennet had been exposed, expressed not more than usual pleasure when embracing her; but gazed in silent wonder, at the rapturous, and to her, unintelligible, expressions of her brother, until, with a serious, yet tender air, he turned to her saying.

“ May the relation, my dear sister, which Jennet, when a little composed can give, inform,

form, and convince your erring judgment, that one imprudent step led to innumerable evils; evils, too horrid for even imagination to dwell on, and let me more particularly assure you, that there is no situation in life, which so much exposes the virtue of a pleasing young woman, as that of separation from her husband, she is open to every insult and various oppression, every libertine considers her his prey, and every fop his amusement; I will not increase your distress by reproach, else how might I upbraid you with those indignities, to which my Jennet has been subjected."

"Cease such accusations," interrupted Jennet, animated with generous spirit, "cease to criminate the best,—the kindest—the most,"—here she hesitated in visible confusion.

"And most what?" demanded Douglas impatiently.—

The

The most unhappy," added she blushing.—

"And will you too conceal the mysterious conduct of Elinor?" said he.

Rest satisfied," replied Jennet, "in knowing she is innocent and good."

"Then what is Montague my love?"

"The dearest most forlorn,—and wretched of mankind," cried Elinor, bursting into tears and hiding her face in Jennet's bosom.

"What am I to imagine?" said Douglas, throwing his arms around them both, "Sure the truth at last must burst with some unequalled horror." Thus in anxious inquiries and ambiguous replies several hours past, when Sir Lionel, judging the day too far advanced for a walk to Mr. Hammond's, resolved to indulge in the sweet smiles of Jennet, and defer his investigations till next morning.

Leav-

Leaving Sir Lionel fondling the infant Anna; Elinor retired with Jennet, and related her interview with Montague, his ruin, contrition, and unaffected tenderness.—

To hear of his sufferings excited the commiseration of Jennet, tho' at the same time she could not help thinking, the justice of heaven signal in avenging his cruel desertion of such a wife. She united with Elinor, in praying that Douglas might not encounter him, and relying on the promised secrecy of Henry, with some degree of composure rejoined Sir Lionel, who then related how he had discovered Jennet.

Elinor expressing much anxiety to know, what had happened to Jennet during her own abode at Clapham, she gratified her in the following words:

The first hours of separation from you, my dear friend, were devoted to regret and the most bitter tears; but reflecting my lamentations

tions could not promote your comfort, nor finish Mrs. Clare's trimmings, I returned to my ordinary employment.

One day that I was busily engaged to complete a dress, in order to visit Anna in the evening, a customer of Mrs. Clare's called, and appeared highly pleased with my taste in arranging the flowers.—

She had the remains of beauty, was very agreeable, and seemed to possess that insinuating affability, which, at the same time that it indicates an amiable and benignant mind, gratifies self-love, by raising the opinion of our own consequence; I confess, I was pleased with her notice, and believed myself honoured by her condescension.

She repeated her visits, and professed a warm predilection in my favour: often regretting that a girl with such beauty and accomplishments, should be lost in obscurity. She made me several little elegant presents,
and

and introduced me to her nieces and Lord Derham, at her own house, and by many delicate attentions, seemed to claim my confidence.

At her request, I related the simple story of my uninteresting life, even from the hour your dear mother took me from my father's humble cottage.

With well affected delight, at what she termed my charming sincerity, she requested I would become her guest, saying if I chose she would solicit the permission of my friends herself, dropping at the same time some dark hints, that tho' Mrs. Clare was very well in *her* way, and an excellent manteau-maker, she was an improper protectress for a lovely young woman.

I gratefully accepted her invitation, candidly acknowledging Sir Lionel Douglas, and his sister were my only friends, and tho' at too great a distance, to inform them immediately,

ly, was certain, they would consider me honoured by her notice.

On my return to Mrs. Clare's, I acquainted her with Mrs. Bentley's invitation, and my intention to accept it.

She feigned displeasure at my leaving her, said she ought to have expected such treatment, as it was the way of the world, to forsake old friends for new ones.

Little heeding her comments, I withdrew to arrange my little wardrobe; but was soon interrupted by a young work-woman, belonging to the house, asking, in a doubting voice, if I really intended going to Mrs. Bentley's.—Assuring her I did,—she demanded if I did not think the family *too gay*, or if I never observed any circumstances to excite suspicion?

“ Too gay,—excite suspicion !” repeated I with resentment, “ you are strangely reprehensible young woman, in allowing your speech such freedom.”

“ Well, Miss,” resumed she mildly, “ as my freedom meant you no harm I trust you will conceal it from Mrs. Clare ; my bread depends on her, and a plain person is my security.”

“ Oh you are perfectly safe,” replied I significantly, “ and in no danger of Mrs. Clare’s anger.” Alas ! a stranger to a designing world, I simply thought the poor girl’s hints were intended to impose on my credulity, either from a desire to revenge the neglect of Mrs. Bentley, who honoured me with such a preference, or to detain me with Mrs. Clare, as I was of utility in her business.

However, Mrs. Bently received me with evident satisfaction, allotted me a very handsome apartment and a servant to attend me. While dressing for dinner one day, that company was expected, she entered my room, saying.

I am perfectly delighted my dear girl, do you know Lord Derham is intimate with

with Sir Lionel Douglas? knew your late benefactress, and wishes to converse with you about them.—

I certainly was pleased with this information, which being confirmed by his Lordship, I blest the fainted woman, whose sacred memory even seemed to raise protectors for her favourite.

Lord Derham almost lived in the house, paid me every attention and watched my very wishes.—I considered him as a father, and when he promised his interest to promote my Douglas; methought I could have worship'd him.

Thus past my week at Mrs. Bentley's, and I can solemnly assert, that I never heard an improper expression, beheld the least indelicacy, or received the smallest indignity: and on your appearance, my Douglas, the heart of Jenet gloried in the thought of presenting you to those friends,
she

She simply believed so liberal and respectable. But how near I was destruction! when my Douglas came to save my peace, and give me happiness."

CHAP. XVII.

A SHORT RETROSPECT.

THO' there can be little doubt concerning the character and occupation of Mrs. Clare, it may be necessary to account for some preceding circumstances; Mrs. Clare was one of those accommodating ladies, who under the mask of trade carry on the disgraceful, infernal traffick of luring indigent beauty, to the abodes of guilt and destruction: yet so cautious was she in all her manœuvres, that she lived perfectly unsuspected by her customers of reputation.

From the first moment that Mrs. Mon-

tague explained her situation, the youth, surprising loveliness, and destitute condition of Jennet attracted her notice, and she devoted her to ruin.—

As nothing could better facilitate her wishes, than the absence of Elinor, she lost no time in procuring a situation, when she immediately introduced Mrs. Bentley to Jennet: her pretended displeasure, at that Lady's invitation being accepted, was to avoid every appearance of collusion.

Being totally ignorant of Jennet's engagements with Sir Lionel, so as the poor victim was secured, she dreaded no material consequences from the ruin of a girl, whom she knew sprung from a welch cottage, and was educated by the charity of Lady Douglas.

The young woman, who so kindly offered a warning to Jennet, had long witnessed her

employer's base practices ; but meeting with so severe a repulse from Jennet, very naturally considered, that she had no inclination to be undeceived ; yet her sweetness of manners, had so engaged her esteem, that willing, if possible, to preserve her innocence, on hearing Sir Lionel inquire for her, without considering her own interest depended on his concealing the information, she discovered Jennet's situation and residence.

Lord Derham, tho' a married man with a family, indulged in every profligate pleasure, and was the intended purchaser of Jennet's honour ; and tho' in other points, he might have scorned a falsehood, her extraordinary beauty had so dazzled his reason, that regardless of every honest principle, he united in the deception of a friendship with Sir Lionel Douglas ; and by promising to support his military pretensions, effectually secreted an interest in the sensible heart of the unsuspecting victim.—

Often

Often, when she was pouring out the artless effusions of gratitude, for his intended kindness, he was near betraying the passion which raged tumultuously within, but on gazing in her beautiful countenance, the modest dignity, which heightened every glowing charm, awed his licentious tongue to silence.—

Thus the ears of Jennet were uncontaminated by those insulting offers and delicacies, so often practised in the mansions of shame and guilt, to humble the pride of virtue, and corrupt the innocent mind.—

But how long his Lordship might have resisted the incitements of impetuous passion, and the persuasions of the blackened demons around him is uncertain, for happily the good genius of Jennet, in the form of Sir Lionel Douglas, interposed and rescued her from determined though delayed destruction.

It was also fortunate for Jennet, that Mrs.
Bentley,

Bentley, lulled in a fancied security, had taken no precaution to conceal her; for had any surprise or inquiry been expected, most probably she had been removed beyond the reach of her friends, and involved in irremediable ruin, before any possibility of preserving her.



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